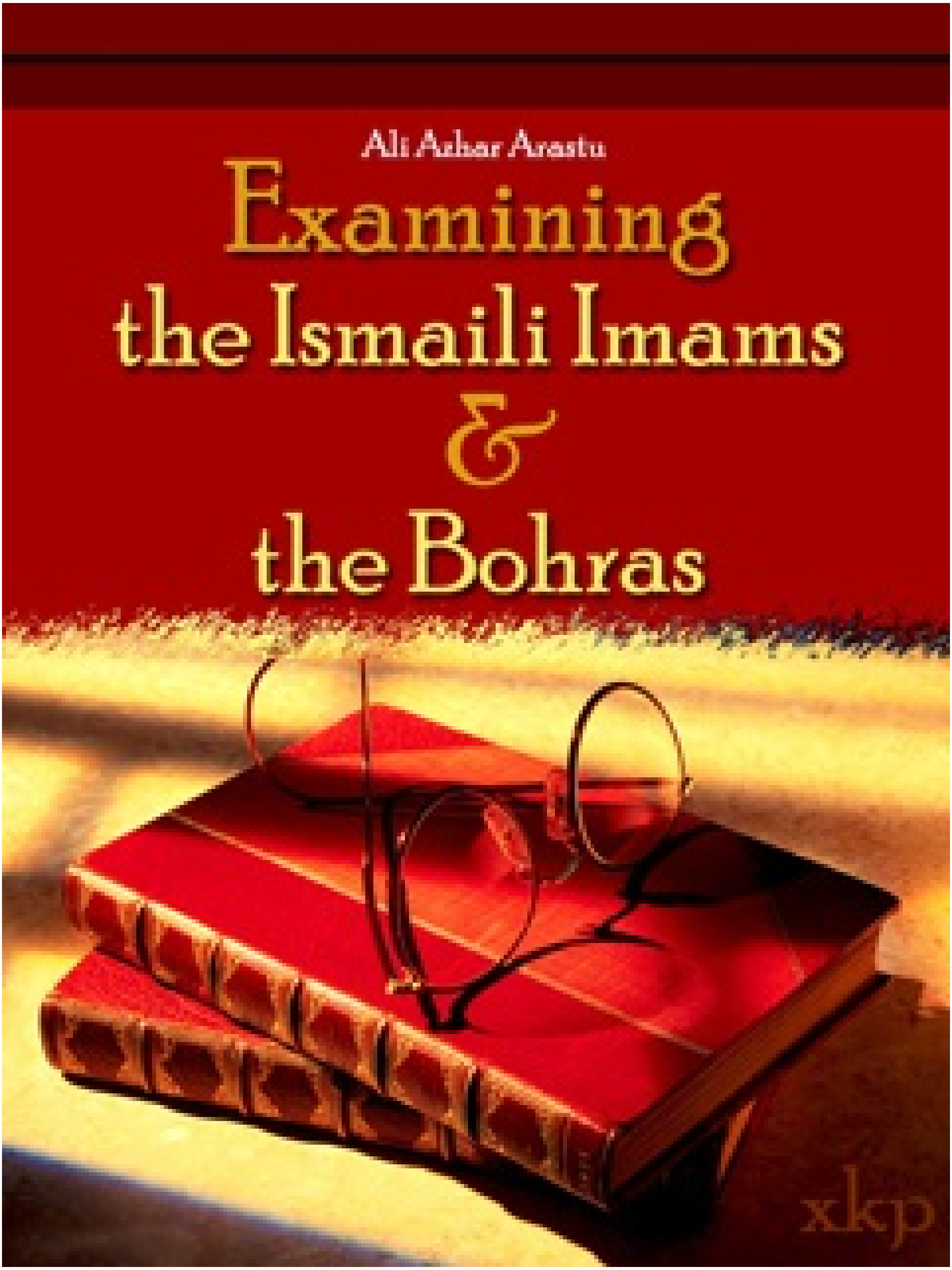

Ali Azhar Arastu
Examining
the Ismaili Imams
&
the Bohras
xkp

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

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point

This book is about the beliefs of Ismailis. Two major sects within the Ismailis are the

Agha Khanis who believe in ۴۹ Imams and the Bohras who believe in ۲۱ Imams. However both the Agha Khanis and the Bohras believe Ismail as an Imam, who was the son of Imam al-Sadiq (as) and they reject Musa al-Kadhim s/o Imam al-Sadiq (as). This book investigates the authenticity of the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams whether they .were really divine

Dedication

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوْا يٰاَيُّهَا الْعَزِيْزُ مَسَّنَا وَاَهْلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَجِئْنَا بِبِضَاعَةٍ مُّزْجٰىةٍ فَاَوْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَجْزِى الْمُتَصَدِّقِيْنَ ۸۸

Then, when they entered into his presence, they said, "O Aziz! Distress has befallen... our family, and us, and we have brought [just] a meager sum. Yet grant us the full (measure, and be charitable to us! Indeed Allah rewards the charitable."(۱)

I dedicate this research to my beloved Imam Mahdi, the awaited savior of the mankind (may Allah hasten his return); to my father, Riazath Husain Arastu; my mother, Tahera Begum Arastu; my brother, Shoukath Husain Arastu, my mother-in-law, Rabab Sultana

p: ۱

Surah Yusuf (۱۲), Ayah ۸۸ -۱

.Razavi, and my father-in-law, Akbar Patel

I also pay special thanks to the personality of Lady Fatima Ma'suma of Qum (The granddaughter of Imam al-Sadiq [as]), for providing me with the opportunity to study in her city and granting me the blessings of her proximity, through which I was able to .complete this book

Abstract

This book has been divided into ۵ segments which have been further divided into .different parts

The first segment defines the meaning of Shia and talks about the different sects within the Shias and further divides Ismailis and talks about the sects within them. It also discusses some of the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams (the Ismaili Imams after Imam al-Sadiq (as))(۱) and it questions the authenticity of the Ismaili Imams and questions the .fact if they were divinely appointed

The second segment of the book deals with the importance of following the right chain and the need to follow the rightful Imams after the Holy Prophet (sawa) (۲). Also discusses the traditions of the Holy Prophet (sawa) regarding his successors (as) and his traditions regarding Imam al-Mahdi, the twelfth Holy Imam (May Allah hasten his reappearance). Also clarifies some doubts that one may have regarding the .(occultation of Imam al-Mahdi (as

The third segment discusses about an ideal Imam and the qualities we should expect from him and then addresses two of the Ithna Ashari Imams after Imam al-Sadiq (as), their designation, what has been said about them not only by Shias but also by .Ahle Sunna

The fourth segment deals with

.as) indicates Alaihis Salaam meaning peace be upon him) -۱

sawa) indicates Sallallahu Alaihi wa A'alihi meaning peace be upon him and his) -۲
progeny

the effect of following the wrong chain and its consequences on their deeds. In addition, one of the Bohra Jurisprudential issues (Bohra Calendar and the moon sighting) is scrutinized in detail.

Finally, the fifth segment discusses the importance of having faith in all of the Prophets, all of the Holy books and all of the Imams. It concludes --as per the Holy Quran-- about the end result of the deeds performed without having true faith.

Preface

All praise is due to Allah (swt),(١) Creator of the universe, and blessings and salutations upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sawa) and his Holy Progeny.

This book is about the beliefs of Ismailis. Two major sects within the Ismailis are the Agha Khanis, who believe in ۴۹ Imams, and the Bohras who believe in ٢١ Imams. However both the Agha Khanis and the Bohras believe in Ismail as an Imam, who was the son of Imam al-Sadiq (as). They therefore reject Musa al-Kadhim s/o Imam al-Sadiq (as) as an Imam. This book investigates the authenticity of the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams and questions whether they were truly divine.

Some of the important sources used for this book were: The Ismaili's their history and doctrines, written by Dr Farhad Daftary. Dr Farhad Daftary is the Co-Director and the head of the Department of Academic Research and Publications at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. An authority on Ismaili studies, Dr Daftary has written more than ١۵٠ articles and written and edited several acclaimed books in this field. And other sources

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١- (swt) indicates Subhana Wa Ta'ala, meaning He is Glorified and Exalted

like Da'aimul Islam, Hamarey Ismaili Madhab Ki Haqeeqat aur Uska Nizam, Ismailiye .az Guzashte ta Hala etc were also utilized

Most of the translation of the verses used in this book is based upon Sayyid Ali Quli .Qarai's translation of the Holy Qur'an

I thank Allah (swt) for giving me the ability to complete this book. I could not have handled this project alone and the contributions made by others have been invaluable. My sincere and deep thanks go to my teacher, Shaykh Kumail Rajani for his guidance and help; my cousin, Haneef Arastu for editing and insight; Sister Nahid Hirmendi and Br Zohair Zaidi for further editing and proof reading; Shaykh Salim Yusufali, Shaykh Muhammed Hasnain, and Br Sher Ali Valji for their help, valuable suggestions and being there when needed; and my wife and my daughters for all .their help, support, insight and suggestions

?(Shia, But Shia of which Imam (leader

point

:The meaning of Shia

Shia" means a group of followers, members of a group, as per Holy Quran, Surah" :Maryam verse ۶۹

ثُمَّ لَنَنْزِعَنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شِيعَةٍ أَيُّهُمْ أَشَدُّ عَلَى الرَّحْمَٰنِ عِتِيًّا ۝٦٩

Then from every group We shall draw whichever of them was more defiant to the All- (beneficent.(۱

هَٰذَا مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ

(This one from among his followers.(۲

.As per the two ayahs quoted above a Shia could be a follower or a member of a group

:The Holy Quran, Surah Isra verse ۷۱ says

يَوْمَ نَدْعُوْا كُلَّ اُنَاسٍ بِـاِمَامِـهِمْ

(The day we shall summon every group of people with their imam.(٣

As per the ayah, the destiny of the

p: ۴

Surah Maryam (١٩) Ayah ۶٩ -١

Surah Qasas (٢٨), Ayah ١۵ -٢

Surah Isra (١٧), Ayah ٧١ -٣

followers depends on their imam and being a Shia does not mean anything, unless we know the Shia of whom.

If one is a Shia (follower) of a wrong leader (Imam) then this leader may invite his Shias towards the fire.

Holy Quran, Surah Qasas verse ٤١, says:

وَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ اَئِمَّةً يَّدْعُوْنَ اِلَى النَّارِ ۚ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ لَا يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾

We made them leaders who invite to the Fire and on the day of Resurrection they will not receive any help.(١)

The fate of the followers (shias) of imams of this kind is not going to be good.

But if one is a Shia (follower) of a rightful leader (Imam) then this leader will lead them towards the truth.

Holy Quran, Surah Sajdah verse ٢٤, says:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ اَئِمَّةً يَّهْدُوْنَ بِاَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوْا ﴿﴾ ۚ وَكَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا يُوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾

And amongst them We appointed imams who guide by Our command when they had been patient and had convictions in Our signs.(٢)

Certainly, the true followers (Shias) of these Imams will be very successful on the day of resurrection. Thus, being a Shia does not mean anything, unless we know the Shia (follower) of whom.

Sects within Shi'as

point

The Shia and Sunni schools of thought form the major sects within the Islamic nation. Similar to the Sunni sect, the Shia sect also has sub-sects within itself. In this book, we will be talking just about the sects within the Shia sect.

The Ithna Ashari Shias (The Twelvers)

The Twelvers are the largest part of the Shia community. They get their name from their acceptance of twelve divinely appointed successors of the Holy

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Surah Qasas (۲۸), Ayah ۴۱ -۱

Surah Sajdah (۳۲), Ayah ۲۴ -۲

Prophet (sawa). They believe that Imam Ali (as) was the first divinely appointed Holy Imam, who succeeded the Holy Prophet (sawa). All of the Holy Imams that the Twelvers follow were martyred, except the last Holy Imam, Imam Al Mahdi (atfs)(١), who is believed to be in occultation. All of the Holy Imams are from the progeny of the Holy Prophet (sawa); they are the sons of Fatima (sa)(٢) and Ali (as), and there is no .doubt or dispute about it

The beliefs of the Ithna Ashari Shias have been discussed in many books only the lives of the ٢ imams, which are not followed by the other sub sects, will be discussed in .detail later in this book

Zaidis

The Zaidis do not believe in the ٥th Imam, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, because he did not revolt against the corrupt government. They follow Zayd ibn Ali Zainul Abideen as their Imam because he staged a revolution against the corrupt rulers of Bani Umayyah. They do not believe in a direct lineage – instead, any descendant of Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn (as) who stages a revolution against a corrupt government is considered as an Imam. The Zaidis do not believe that the Imams are divinely appointed. They also do not believe in the infallibility of the Imams, nor do they believe that the Imams receive divine guidance. The Zaidis are mainly found in .Yemen

Alawis

Alawis loved the Ahlul Bayt(٣) (as) to the extent that after seeing the impeccable qualities of the Ahlul

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١- Ajjal Allaho Tala Farajahu Shareef (May Allah hasten his reappearance)

٢- Salamullah Alaiha (Peace be upon her)

٣- The family of the Prophet (sawa), Imam Ali, Lady Fatema, Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn (as) and the nine Imams that succeeded Imam Husayn (as)

Bayt (as) they started exaggerating the status of the Imams. Alawites are also called Nusayris, Nusairis, Namiriya or Ansariyya. They are also known as the exaggerators. Within Alawites they have various sects. There are over one million Alawis that live in .Syria and Lebanon. The Ithna Ashari Imams have condemned the exaggerators

The Ismailis

The Ismailis are a branch of Islam that is the second largest part of the Shia community after the Twelvers. They get their name from their acceptance of Ismail .(Ibn Jafar (as) as the divinely appointed spiritual successor to Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as

The Ismailis dispute the succession of the seventh Imam - they say that Ismail ibn Jafar actually succeeded Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as), whereas the Ithna Ashari Shias believe that Musa al-Kadhim (as) succeeded Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as). Ismail died before his father. However, some of the Ismailis claim that Ismail had not died, but rather, had gone into Ghaibat (occultation). Some of the Ismailis accepted his death .and therefore claim that his eldest son, Muhammad Ibn Ismail, was now Imam

There are several offshoots of Ismailis; the most popular ones among them are the .Aga Khanis, the Dawoodi Bohras, and the Druze

The Druze

After the Fatimid Empire was established in ۹۰۹ AD by Ubaydallah al- Mahdi Billah, he claimed the Ismaili Imamate. The sixth caliph of the Fatimid Empire, al-Hakim bi-Amrillah, ascended the throne when he was only eleven years old and was feared for ,his eccentricity and insanity. The Fatimid Empire was known for its religious tolerance

but under the reign of al-Hakim, a lot of persecution was seen. In ١٠٢١ AD (۴۴١ AH), al-Hakim had gone on his mule but never returned and only his mule returned and it was soaked in blood. This led to the birth of the sect of the Druze, who did not accept the successor of al-Hakim and believed that al-Hakim was an incarnation of God and was the Mahdi, who would one day return and bring justice to the world.

The Nizaris

The second but major split among the Ismailis occurred following the death of the Fatimid Caliph, al-Mustansir Billah in ۴٨٧ AH (١٠٩۴ AD). After he passed away, the older son Nizar and the younger son fought for the empire. Nizar was defeated and was jailed. His son, however, escaped. A group of people started believing him to be the Imam, and the Imamate of the Nizaris continues to their present, Imam Aga Khan IV. The term Ismailis is referred to the Nizari community, who are followers of the Aga Khan and they are the largest group among the Ismailis.

The Agha Khanis or the Nizaris consider Imam Ali (as) as the first Imam and Imam Husayn (as) as the second Imam and do not consider Imam Hasan (as) as an Imam.(١)

The Mustalis

Al-Mustali was the younger son of al-Mustansir Billah, whom he succeeded in defeating Nizar. The followers of the Mustali line are also known as Taiyyebi, named after their ٢١st Imam, Imam al-Taiyyeb who they believe has gone into hiding. The Taiyyebi's

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١- Daftary, Farhad, Ismailis their history and doctrines, p. ۵۵١

further split into different sects, such as Dawoodi Bohras, Sulaymani Bohras, Alavi ...Bohras and Hebtiah Bohras etc

The Bohras consider Imam Ali (as) as the Wasi of the Prophet (sawa); hence Imam (Hasan (as) is the first Imam for the Bohras.(۱)

Ismaili Imams

point

:A brief look at the Ismaili Imams

This section focuses on the Ismaili Imams starting from Ismail. I will briefly narrate their lives and examine the issues arising, especially from the point of view of their being qualified for being appointed as Leaders of the Divine Religion of Islam

:Following is the genealogical table of the Fatimid Ismaili Caliph Imams

۱. Ismail Ibn Jafar (d ۱۳۶ AH/۷۵۴ AD) (۶th Ismaili Imam)

۲. Muhammad al-Maktum ibn Ismail (not much info available) (۷th Ismaili Imam)

۳. Abd Allah ibn Muhammad (no dates available) (۸th Ismaili Imam)

۴. Ahmad ibn Abd Allah (no dates available) (۹th Ismaili Imam)

۵. Al-Husayn ibn Ahmad (d ۲۶۸ AH/ ۸۸۱ AD) (۱۰th Ismaili Imam)

۶. Abu Muhammed 'Ubayd Allah (Abd Allah) al-Mahdi Billah (d ۳۲۲ AH/۹۳۴ AD) (۱st Fatimid Caliph) (۱۱th Ismaili Imam)

۷. Abul Qasim Muhammed al-Qaim bi Amr Allah (d ۳۳۴ AH/۹۴۶ AD) (۲nd Fatimid Caliph) ((۱۲th Ismaili Imam

۸. Abu Tahir Ismail al-Mansur Billah (d ۳۴۱ AH/۹۵۳ AD) (۳rd Fatimid Caliph) (۱۳th Ismaili Imam)

۹. Abu Tamim Ma'add al-Muizz li din Allah (d ۳۶۵ AH/ ۹۷۵ AD) (۴th Fatimid Caliph)(۱۴th

(Ismaili Imam

Abu Mansur Nizar al-Aziz Billah (d ۳۸۶ AH/۹۹۶ AD) (۵th Fatimid Caliph) (۱۵th Ismaili .۱۰ (Imam

Abu Ali al-Mansur al-Hakim bi Amr Allah (d ۴۱۱ AH/۱۰۲۱ AD) (۶th Fatimid Caliph) (۱۶th .۱۱ (Ismaili Imam

Abul Hasan Ali al-Zahir li I'zaz din Allah (d ۴۲۷ AH/۱۰۳۶ .۱۲

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ibid, p. ۵۵۱ -۱

(AD) (۷th Fatimid Caliph) (۱۷th Ismaili Imam

Abu Tamim Ma'add al-Mustansir Billah (d ۴۸۷ AH/۱۰۹۴ AD)(۱) (۸th Fatimid Caliph) . ۱۳ ((۱۸th Ismaili Imam

(Al-Mustali Billah (d ۴۹۵ AH/۱۱۰۱ AD) ۹th Fatimid Caliph) (۱۹th Taiyyebi/Mustali Imam .۱۴

Al-Amir bi Ahkam Allah (d ۵۲۴ AH/۱۱۳۰ AD)(۲) (۱۰th Fatimid Caliph)(۲۰th . ۱۵ (Taiyyebi/Mustali Imam

(Al-Tayyib went into hiding (۲۱st Taiyyebi/Mustali Imam .۱۶

Ismail Ibn Jafar (۶th Ismaili Imam) Start of the Split

point

Ismail was the oldest son of Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as). Some of the Shias used to think that Ismail would be the next Imam after Imam al-Sadiq (as), since he was the oldest and Imam al-Sadiq (as) loved him very much. However, Ismail died while Imam al-Sadiq (as) was still alive. It is reported that when the funeral of Ismail was being taken to the Baqi cemetery in Medina, Imam al-Sadiq (as) uncovered the face of his deceased son Ismail a few times to show that he was dead. His intention in doing that was to establish the fact of Ismail's death to those who had thought that he was to succeed after al-Sadiq (as) and to remove any doubt regarding him still being alive.(۳) Many Ismaili and non-Ismaili sources report the story of how, before and during Ismail's funeral procession, Imam al-Sadiq made deliberate attempts to show the (face of his dead son to witnesses.(۴

Ismailis believe that Ismail was the ۶th Imam and is highly revered by them. Unfortunately, Ismaili sources such as the 'Uyun al-Akhbar' contain little historical (information of any value concerning him. (۵

According to some Ismaili authors, Ismail survived Imam al-Sadiq (as). However, the majority of sources

۱- There was a split among the Ismailis after the death of al-Mustansir, some believed that al-Mustali was the rightful successor and some believed that Nizar was the rightful successor. The ones who believed in Nizar are known as the Agha Khanis today. (The Ismailis, their History and Doctrines, p. ۵۵۲)

۲- Another split occurred after the death of Al Amr bi Ahkam Allah, some believed in Al Tayyib as their Imam and some believed in Abdal Majid al-Hafiz ibn Abul Qasim Muhammad ibn al-Mustansir Billah as their Imam. The ones who believed in Al Taiyyib as their Imam are Tayyibis and the Bohras today.

۳- Al-Mufid, Shaykh, Kitab al Irshad, translated by I.K.A. Howard, p. ۴۳۱

۴- Daftary,Farhad, The Ismailis their history and doctrines, p. ۹۷

۵- Ibid., p. ۹۷

report that he predeceased his father in Medina, and was buried in Baqi cemetery. Hasan b. Nuh al-Bharuchi, an Indian Ismaili author, relates visiting Ismail's grave in Medina in ۹۰۴ H/۱۴۹۸ AD.(۱)

Ismail was popular among the radical Shias and was closely associated with them. Imam al-Sadiq (as) did not approve of these radical Shias who were leading his son astray.(۲)

According to another report, Ismail was evidently involved in a militant anti-regime plot in collaboration with several others, including Bassam b. Abd Allah al-Sayrafi, another extremist Shia. This is one of the occasions reported by the Imami sources, during which al-Sadiq expressed his strong disapproval of Ismail's activities.(۳)

Ismailis believe that Ismail {the oldest son of Imam al-Sadiq (as)} was the Imam who succeeded Imam al-Sadiq (as). However, it is a known fact in history that Ismail died in the year ۱۳۶ AH/۷۵۴ AD(۴), whereas Imam al-Sadiq (as) died in the year ۱۴۸ AH/۷۶۵ AD.(۵) Moreover, one source actually places the death of Ismail in the year ۱۳۳ AH/۷۵۱ AD.(۶) How can an Imam be a successor if he is already dead? It does not make sense!

Some of the Ismailis claim that Ismail had not died, but rather gone into Ghaibat (occultation) – this belief cannot be true because this is a known fact in history that Imam al-Sadiq (as) led the funeral prayers of Ismail when he died. However, some of the Ismailis accepted his death, and therefore claim that his eldest son, Muhammed Ibn Ismail, was the Imam after Ismail.

۱- Ibid., p. ۹۷

۲- The Ismailis their history and doctrines, p. ۹۸; Note this is not the exact text rather gist of what was written.

۳- ibid., pp. ۹۸ ۹۹; Note: Some extracts are used and not the whole paragraph.

۴- ibid, p. ۵۵۱

۵- ibid, p. ۵۵۱

۶- Ali, Dr. Zahid, Tarikh-i- Fatimiyyin-i-Misr, vol. ۱, pp. ۴۱, ۴۳ ۶۳ (۲nd edition, Karachi

This also does not make sense because if Ismail had died during the lifetime of Imam al-Sadiq (as), and hence was not an Imam, then how can his son Muhammed Ibn ?Ismail become an Imam

Some questions to raise ponder about

 Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) never appointed Ismail as his successor. Even the Ismaili books have no mention that Ismail was appointed by Imam al-Sadiq (as) as his successor. The Ismaili books, like 'Imam e Ismail' written by Mulla Hussain Ali Saheb Sarangpoori' written in Urdu,(١) claim that Ismail was appointed successor by Imam .al-Sadiq (as), but unfortunately, provided no reference to prove his claim

 Let us suppose that Ismail was appointed as a successor of Imam al-Sadiq (as). However, Ismail ibn Jafar died while Imam al-Sadiq (as) was still alive and al-Sadiq (as) was the Imam of the time. This means that Ismail was not an Imam when he died. Then why do the Ismailis take him as an Imam? Why do the Ismailis automatically assume that Muhammad ibn Ismail was the successor of Imam al-?(Sadiq (as

 If Ismail was an Imam, then why don't the Ismailis have much information regarding him? The Ismaili books, such as 'Uyun al- Akhbar', contain little information .regarding him

 Ismail was popular among the radical Shias and was closely associated with them. Imam al-Sadiq (as) did not approve of these radical Shias who were leading his son astray. A person who is meant to be an Imam should have impeccable qualities. Ismail was closely associated with the radical shias, who

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Khan, Sa'adat Hussain, Bohra Madhab Dar Haqeeqat Ke Ainey Me', p. ٣٣ -١

?were not approved by Imam al-Sadiq (as), why

 Ismail was evidently involved in a militant anti-regime plot in collaboration with several others, including Bassam b. Abd Allah al-Sayrafi, another extremist Shia. Imam al-Sadiq (as) expressed his strong disapproval of Ismail's activities. How can it ?be possible that Imam al-Sadiq (as) would appoint such a son as his successor

 A successor is one who succeeds, but Ismail died before his father and did not ?succeed Imam al-Sadiq (as). How can he be a successor then

 There are no thought provoking sayings of Ismail ibn Jafar found in the scrolls of ?history, why

Muhammed Ibn Ismail, Abd Allah ibn Muhammad Ahmad ibn Abd Allah

point

Muhammed Ibn Ismail, Abd Allah ibn Muhammad Ahmad ibn Abd Allah (۷th, ۸th and (۹th Ismaili Imams respectively

Muhammad was the eldest son of Ismail ibn Jafar. As per the Ismaili sources, he was ۲۶ years old when Imam al-Sadiq (as) was martyred and was ۸ years older than his uncle, Imam Musa ibn Jafar (as). On the basis of these details, Muhammad ibn Ismail must have been born around ۱۲۰ AH/۷۳۸ AD. However, as per Dastur al-Munajjimin, he was born in ۱۲۱ AH/November ۷۳۹ AD.(۱) Muhammad was ۱۴ years old when his father Ismail died, and since Ismail predeceased his father Imam al-Sadiq (as) by some ۱۲ years, around ۱۳۶ AH. Hence, he was around ۲۶ years old when Imam al-Sadiq (as) (was martyred.(۲

Idris Imad al-Din, the ۱۹th Dai of Tayyibis (d ۸۷۲ AH), in the book, 'Zahr al Ma'ani', says that Imam al-Sadiq (as) appointed Musa al-Kadhim as his

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Bahmanpour, Muhammad Saeed, Ismailiye az Guzashte ta hala, p. ۲۱; The Ismailis -۱ their history and doctrines, p. ۱۰۲

The Ismailis their history and doctrines, p. ۶۰۱, quoting from Asrar al Nutaqa written -۲
.by Idris Imad al-din. Note: The gist of what is written in the notes

successor, but his goal in doing so was to protect the Imamate of Muhammad Ibn Ismail.(۱)

Dr. Zahid Ali quotes Idris Imad al-Din, the ۱۹th Dai of Tayyibis, "Imam Musa al-Kadhim's mother was a slave, and an Imam cannot be born to a slave girl; whereas the mother of Muhammad Ibn Ismail was not a slave girl."(۲)

It is strange that there is not much information regarding Muhammad ibn Ismail in the books of Ismailis, even though he was one of the most important Imams of the Ismailis. However, they do say that after most of the Shias accepted Musa Ibn Jafar as the successor of Imam al-Sadiq (as), Muhammad ibn Ismail left Madina and went to the east and lived secretly. This is why he acquired the epithet al-Maktum, the Hidden.(۳) It is also said that he first went to southern Iraq and then to Persia, spending the latter part of his life in Khuzistan, in southwestern Persia.(۴)

It is also said that after the martyrdom of Imam al-Sadiq (as), Muhammad ibn Ismail did not oppose his uncle, Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as), as long as he was in Madina. Instead, he respected him. Additionally, he also consulted with Musa ibn Jafar on important matters. It is narrated from Ali ibn Jafar that Muhammad ibn Ismail, before going to Iraq, asked the permission of his uncle, Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as). At this point, Imam Musa told Muhammad to refrain from shedding his (Imam Musa's) blood. Muhammad ibn Ismail replied by saying, 'curse

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۱ - Ali, Dr Zahid, Hamarey Ismaili Madhab Ki Haqeeqat Aur Uska Nizam, p. ۱۵۶ ۱۵۷; Ismailiye az Guzashte ta hala, p. ۲۲

۲- Bohra Madhab Haqeeqat ke Ainey me, p. ۱۰

۳- Ismailiye az Guzashte ta hala, p. ۲۱; The Ismailis their history and doctrines, p. ۱۰۲; Note this is not the exact text rather gist of what was written.

۴ - The Ismailis their history and doctrines, pp. ۱۰۲ ۱۰۳; Note this is not the exact text rather gist of what was written

be upon the person who takes part in shedding your blood'. Musa Ibn Jafar (as) gave him ample money for his travel. Unfortunately, when Muhammad ibn Ismail reached Iraq, he went to Harun al Rashid, the Abbasid king, and said something to instigate Harun against Musa ibn Jafar. This led to the martyrdom of Musa ibn Jafar. Harun rewarded Muhammad ibn Ismail with ١٠٠,٠٠٠ dirhams but when Muhammad ibn Ismail reached home with this wealth, he suffered severe pain in his throat and died the very night. He could never enjoy that wealth he received by false accusations against his uncle Musa ibn Jafar.(١)

The exact date of Muhammad's death remains unknown. But it is almost certain that he died during the caliphate of Harun al-Rashid, perhaps soon after ١٧٩ Hijri/٧٩٥-٧٩۶ AD, the year in which al-Rashid, continuing the anti-Alid policy of his predecessors, arrested Musa ibn Jafar (as) in Medina and banished him to Iraq as a prisoner.(٢)

There is almost no information regarding the followers of Muhammad ibn Ismail and the history of Ismailis is quiet and dubious for about almost one century after the death of Muhammad Ibn Ismail.(٣)

Some questions to raise ponder about

 Idris Imad al-Din the ١٩th Dai of Tayyibis (d ٨٧٢ AH) in the book 'Zahr al Ma'ani' says that Imam al-Sadiq (as) appointed Musa al-Kadhim as his successor, but his goal in doing so was to protect the Imamate of Muhammad Ibn Ismail. My question is, are there any traditions of Imam al-Sadiq (as) clarifying that he appointed Musa al-Kadhim

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١- Ismailiye az Guzashte ta hala, pp. ٢٣ ٢۴

٢- The Ismailis their history and doctrines, p. ١٠٣

٣- Ismailiye az Guzashte ta hala, p. ٢۶ quoting from Madelong's Dairatul Maaref Adyan, p. ٢۴٨

as) as his successor to protect Muhammad Ibn Ismail? Another question – are they) accusing Imam al-Sadiq (as) of not telling the truth? Imam, as a Ma'soom (infallible), cannot lie! The history tells us that Imam Musa al-Kadhim was appointed, but is there anywhere in history we find that Muhammad Ibn Ismail was appointed? There are traditions from authentic sources that Imam al-Sadiq (as) appointed Musa al-Kadhim (as), not only in the books of Ithna Ashari Shia but also found in the Ismaili books too, .'like Dai Idris Imad al-Din, who talks about it in the book 'Zahr al Maani

 Dr. Zahid Ali quotes Idris Imad al-Din the ۱۹th Dai of Tayyibis, "Imam Musa al-Kadhim's mother was a slave and an Imam cannot be born to a slave girl, whereas the mother of Muhammad Ibn Ismail was not a slave girl." The Dai Idris gives the reason why the Ismailis do not accept Musa al-Kadhim as their Imam, just because he was born to a slave girl. This means that if Musa al-Kadhim (as) would have been born to a wife of Imam al-Sadiq (as), then the Ismailis would have accepted Musa al-Kadhim as their Imam. Then, what about Muhammad ibn Ismail? Then, what about their claim that Imam al-Sadiq (as) appointed Musa al-Kadhim just to protect Muhammad Ibn Ismail? Furthermore, what is wrong if Imam al-Kadhim (as) was born to a slave girl? The Ismailis do not accept him as an Imam because he was born to a !slave girl

Nabi Ibrahim's son Nabi Ismail (as) was the son of Hajara (sa), who was also a slave girl of Nabi Ibrahim! Our Holy Prophet (sawa) was from the progeny of Nabi Ismail (as), which means the great grandmother of the Holy Prophet (sawa) was a slave girl! In fact, one of the main reasons why the Jews and Christians did not accept the Holy Prophet (sawa) was because he (sawa) was from the progeny of Nabi Ismail, who was born to a slave girl! The Jews and Christians saw the signs of Prophethood in the Holy Prophet (sawa), but still rejected him just because he was from the progeny of Nabi Ismail, who was born to a slave girl. Does this mean that the Ismailis, even though they saw the signs of an Imam in Musa al-Kadhim, rejected him only because he was !born to a slave girl of Imam al-Sadiq (as)? This is something to seriously ponder about

 Wasn't Hajara (sa), the Prophet Abraham's wife, a bondwoman? Did she not bear Ismail (Ishmael) (as), of whom the Prophet Muhammad (sawa) is a direct descendant? If it is acceptable for the Prophet Muhammad (sawa), the Seal of Prophethood, to be a descendant of Ismail (as) who was born to a bondwoman, then why should it be ?(shameful for Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as

 Why are there no thought provoking sayings of Muhammad ibn Ismail found in the ?scrolls of history

 If Muhammad ibn Ismail was hidden, as is indicated by his title

al-Maktum (The hidden)', then why are there no traditions of the Holy Prophet (sawa)' or Imams [Imam Ali to Imam al-Sadiq (as)] speaking about him? Our Holy Prophet (sawa) and the Imams [Imam Ali to Imam al-Sadiq (as)] have all talked about Imam Mahdi (as) and the fact that he would go into occultation. There are a lot of traditions of the Holy Prophet (sawa) talking about Imam Mahdi, the ١٢th Imam of the Ithna Ashari Shias, both in the books of Ahle Sunna(١) and the books of Ithna Asharis. Our Holy Prophet (sawa) spoke in detail about his successors, as documented in the books of Ahle Sunna and Ithna Ashari Shias. Then why is there nothing mentioned about ?Muhammad ibn Ismail and that he would be hidden

 It is strange that there is not much information regarding Muhammad ibn Ismail in the books of Ismailis, even though he was one of the most important Imams of the ?Ismailis. Why

 Are there any traditions of Imam al-Sadiq (as) that he appointed Muhammad ibn Ismail as his successor? Are there any traditions in the Ismaili books regarding it? ?Why not

 There a lot of clear traditions about Musa al-Kadhim (as) that he was appointed by ?Imam al-Sadiq (as).(٢) Why not Muhammad ibn Ismail

 There is not much known about the three Ismaili Imams, Muhammed Ibn Ismail, Abdallah ibn Muhammed and Ahmad ibn Abdallah, three Ismaili Imams after Ismail ibn Jafar. The history does not even tell us when they died. Suppose the argument is posed

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The traditions regarding Imam al-Mahdi are going to be discussed later in this - ١ .book

.The traditions regarding Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) will be discussed later -٢

that they were hidden imams and this is why there is nothing known about them. Well, if they were hidden, then why is there no tradition from the Holy Prophet (sawa) or the ?Imams (as)? There is not a single tradition regarding these three hidden imams

 It is true that the Ithna Ashari Shias believe in occultation, but the one they believe in is the occultation of Imam Mahdi (atfs) because there are numerous traditions of the Holy Prophet (sawa) and the rightful Imams regarding Imam Mahdi (atfs) that give the reason of his occultation and also speak about the signs of his reappearance. On the contrary, there are no traditions regarding the three Ismaili Imams if they ...would be Mastoor or hidden. Something to ponder about

(Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi Billah (The first Fatimid Caliph) (١١th Ismaili Imam

point

Husayn ibn Ahmed (١٠th Ismaili Imam) succeeded Ahmed ibn Abdallah, and died in ٢۶٨ AH/٨٨١ AD.(١) There is not much information about Husayn ibn Ahmad. Then after ٢٨ years, Abu Muhammad 'Ubayd Allah (Abdallah) al-Mahdi Billah emerged and founded .the Fatimid kingdom in ٢٩٧ AH/٩٠٩ AD

It is necessary to point out at this juncture that the issue of the genealogy of the Fatimid caliphs has been the center of numerous controversies. The ancestors of the Fatimid, according to the later official doctrine, were the Ismaili imams who descended from Muhammad ibn Ismail. However, the Ismaili sources are very reluctant to mention the names of these so-called 'hidden imams' who are the links between 'Ubayd Allah and Muhammad ibn Ismail ibn Jafar. Their names

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The Ismailis Their history and doctrines, p. ۵۵١ -١

are in fact not even found in the earliest Ismaili sources which have so far come to light.(1)

The Fatimid caliphs refused to publish their official genealogy. Ubayd Allah, the only one among them who did make such an attempt, simply added to the confusion. Ubayd Allah claimed that he was the son of Al Husayn ibn Ahmed ibn Abd Allah ibn Abd Allah ibn Jafar, strangely enough instead of tracing his descent to Ismail ibn Jafar and his son Muhammad ibn Ismail, he names the other son, Abd Allah ibn Jafar as his progenitor.(2) There is also debate on whether the successor of Ubayd Allah was his son or not.

Ubaydallah and his forefathers were 'Dais' and representatives of the hidden Ismaili Imam and were not from the progeny of Ali Ibn abi Talib (as) Their claim that they were from the progeny of Imam Ali (as) Fatema (sa) is null and void.(3)

Ubaydallah, before he established the Fatimid kingdom, was considered as the 'Dai' and representative of the Hidden Imam - this is why Abu Abdullah Shi'i helped him establish the kingdom. But after establishing the Fatimid kingdom, Ubaydallah announced that he was the Imam himself.(4) Maybe this is why Ubaydallah killed Abdullah Shi'i? As Abdullah Shi'i was under the impression that Ubaydallah was the Dai of the hidden Imam, and when he sat on the throne claiming that he was the Imam, maybe Abdullah Shi'i objected to this claim and was killed. It is also said that Abdullah Shi'i

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١- Ibid, p. ١٠٨; Note this is not the exact text rather gist of what was written.

٢- Ibid, p. ١٠٨; Note this is not the exact text rather gist of what was written.

٣- Ismailiye az Guzashte ta hala, p. ٢٨; quoted from 'Tareekh Jahangusha' by Juvaini, p. ٤٣١; And in 'al Kamil' by Ibn al Atheer, vol. ٩, p. ٢٣۶

۴- Ismailiye az Guzashte ta hala, p. ٢٧

was very powerful and had a lot of following and was the main person behind the .success of Ubaydallah

Qadhi Abdul Jabbar in his book ‘Tathbeet Dalail al Nabuvvat’ said, that ‘Abu Abdullah said that Ubaydallah is not al-Mahdi nor is he an Imam rather he is a very ill natured individual.’ And this was said in front of Ubaydallah and the people.(١) Ubaydallah realized the danger and ordered the execution of Abu Abdullah Shi’i and his brother Abul Abbas and they were both killed in the month of Jamadi ul Thani of year ٢٩٨ AH. Ubaydallah did not stop there; he also ordered the supporters of Abu Abdullah be killed too. This is how Ubaydallah established his power on the blood of the ones who (brought him to power.(٢

Some questions to raise ponder about

 As per our discussion above, it is clear that there are definite doubts whether the Fatimid caliphs really were the descendants of Fatima (sa) and Imam Ali (as). Can we ?(accept imams if they are not from the chain of Ahlul Bayt (as

 Why did the Fatimid refuse to publish their official genealogy? Something to ponder .about

 Ubaydallah confused the issue of his lineage; he traced his lineage to Abd Allah ibn ?Jafar instead of Muhammad ibn Ismail. Why? Did he not know

 Why did Ubaydallah use the title al Mahdi? Maybe because there are several ahadith of the Holy Prophet (sawa) and the rightful Imams about Imam Mahdi that he will appear and establish peace and justice in the world. Could

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Farmaniyan, Mahdi, Ismailiye dar Tarikh wa Aqaaed, p. ٧٢, Quoted from Tathbeet -١ Dalail Al Nabuvvat vol. ١, pp. ٣٨٩-٣٩٠

Ismailiye dar Tarikh wa Aqaaed, p. ٧٢ quoted from Iftitah al Daawat -٢

it be because when the eleventh Imam of the Ithna Ashari Shias was martyred in ۲۶۰ H, and the twelfth Imam went into minor occultation, Ubayd Allah took advantage of the timing and declared himself as Imam al- Mahdi? Maybe, Ubaydallah used this title to tell the people that he is the one that the Holy Prophet (sawa) talked about. Ubaydallah, who claimed to be al-Mahdi, was supposed to establish peace and justice .in the world, but he did not. Ubaydallah al-Mahdi died in the year ۳۲۲ AH/۹۳۴ AD

 A person, who was popularly known as Shaikh ul-Mashaikh, asked Ubaydallah al-Mahdi, 'If you really are the Mahdi, then show us a sign.' Ubaydallah killed him.(۱) ?Why? If he was the true Mahdi then he should have proven it

 The next Ismaili Imam who succeeded Ubaydallah was Abul Qasim Muhammad al-Qaim bi-Amr Allah (۱۲th Ismaili Imam). Why was al-Qaim used as his title? The title al-Qaim is also one of the titles of Imam Mahdi, the awaited savior of mankind. There are a number of traditions of the Holy Prophet (sawa) and the Holy Imams (as) that say al-Qaim/ al-Mahdi is the one from the Ahlul Bayt who will bring justice and peace to the world. Did Ubaydallah use this title to get into power? Did his successor use the !title to remain in power? Something to ponder about

 If Ubaydallah or his successor would have brought peace and justice in the world, then I would have believed in them. But they

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Ismailiye az Guzashte ta hala, p. ۷۷; quoted from 'al Kamil' by ibn al Atheer pp. ۵۱-۵۲ -۱

did not! The Hadith of the Prophet (sawa) says that the world will be filled with peace !and justice when al-Mahdi returns. That did not happen at all. We are still suffering

Other Fatimid Caliphs after the death of Ubaydallah

For the sake of brevity, some of the Ismaili Imams like the ۳rd and the ۴th Fatimid .Caliphs are not being discussed in detail

Abu Mansur Nizar al-Aziz Billah (Died ۳۸۶ AH/۹۹۶ AD) (۵th Fatimid Caliph)(۱۵th Ismaili (Imam

point

The unusual policy of assigning numerous high administrative posts to Christians and Jews in a Shia Muslim state was basically in line with the religious toleration practiced by the Fatimids. But al-Aziz went further than his predecessors and set remarkable precedents in this area, probably being encouraged by his Christian wife, perhaps the mother of his only surviving son and successor. In fact, through the recommendations of al-Aziz that his two brothers-in-law, Orestes and Arsenius became respectively, the Melkite patriarch of Jerusalem and the metropolitan of Cairo in ۳۷۵ AH/۹۸۶ AD. Moreover, the caliph behaved favorably, despite Muslim opposition, towards the Coptic patriarch Ephraim, allowing him to rebuild the church of St Mercurius near Fustat (Old Cairo). The Christians, in particular, enjoyed a large degree of religious (freedom and participation in government under al- Aziz.(۱

Some questions to raise ponder about

 It was not just al-Aziz, rather, it was the practice of the Fatimid to give high posts to Christians and the Jews. Why? Was it for power? Was it for diplomatic reasons? The true appointed imams are not diplomatic; they are kind and humble, but when it comes to duty, they are not diplomatic. Best example was when Imam Ali (as) was

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۱ - The Ismailis Their history and doctrines, p. ۱۸۵; Note extract was taken from the

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Khalifa. He was not diplomatic, as was in the case of Muwiya; when Imam Ali (as) became the Khalifa, Muawiya was the governor of Damascus. Imam Ali (as) wanted to send a letter to Muawiya asking him to step down as he was corrupt. Ibn Abbas advised Imam Ali (as) not to do this, and to be diplomatic for the time being, as things were very unstable at the time. But, Imam Ali (as) did not listen to Ibn Abbas's suggestion and sent the letter to Muawiya anyway, ordering him to step down. He (as) was not flexible; that is why the worldly people did not like him (as) because he (as) did everything in the way of Allah and did not mind the people nor was he (as) .concerned about caliphate

 Regarding al-Aziz's wife: The history does not say that she converted to Islam. She remained Christian and never converted to Islam.(۱) If so, can we expect a divinely appointed Imam to do such a thing? I would understand if she would have converted, but as per history, she did not. We really need to have some clear thinking on this ?matter...were these divinely appointed Imams

Abu Ali al-Mansur al-Hakim bi Amr Allah (d ۴۱۱ AH/۱۰۲۱ AD) (۶th Fatimid Caliph) (۱۶th (Ismaili Imam

point

Al-Aziz Billah died in October ۹۹۶ AD and was succeeded by Abu Ali al- Mansur al-Hakim bi Amr Allah who was then about eleven years of age. Barjawan was the tutor and guardian of al-Hakim, since before the latter's accession. Al-Hakim had developed a deep hatred for Barjawan, who had been a severe disciplinarian

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۱- Ismailiye az Guzashte ta hala, p. ۸۶; quoted from the book 'al Kamil' by ibn al Atheer .vol. ۹, p. ۱۱۶

with the caliph, limiting his authority and restricting him to the palace. Al-Hakim had Barjawan killed in ٣٩٠ AH/١٠٠٠ AD with the encouragement and collaboration of another eunuch slave, Raydan. Henceforth, al-Hakim became the real ruler of the Fatimid state.(١)

Question to raise ponder about

 Barjawan was the tutor and the guardian of al-Hakim! I would understand maybe Barjawan might have gone overboard, so al- Hakim had him killed? I would understand that if it was the sole decision of al-Hakim...but it was not his sole decision! He was encouraged by a slave Raydan. An Imam being told what to do by a slave! Was al-Hakim afraid that Barjawan would take his throne so he got rid of him and sat on the throne? We really need to see the kind of lives they led, clearly think this matter out...were these people divinely appointed Imams?

Al-Hakim issued an endless series of the most extraordinary decrees, which were often abolished or reversed at later dates. His changing moods and eccentricities have given rise to many different descriptions of his character, even causing some to regard al-Hakim as a person of unbalanced character.(٢)

Some things to ponder about

 The divinely appointed Imams are supposed to be flawless, al- Hakim was known for his changing moods and eccentricities and also known as a person of unbalanced character! Can such person be considered an Imam?

 None of the decrees of a true Imam would need to be abolished or reversed!

Dr. Zahid Ali, quotes Syedna Hamiduddin when he visited Egypt and he saw the politics and the government of

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١- The Ismailis Their history and doctrines, pp. ١٨۶, ١٨٧ ١٨٨; Note: This is not the exact text rather gist of what was written.

Ibid., p. ۱۸۸ -۲

al-Hakim he said, 'Some of the deeds of Moulana Hakim were dark and mind boggling and they were a calamity for the ones who are propagating (the Ismaili religion) and his deeds were a great test, we should ignore these deeds, we should not even consider them as bad deeds even though apparently we do not see any wisdom in them'. Dr. Zahid Ali then says, 'Syedna has described a horrifying picture of the era of (al-Hakim.'(١)

Some things to ponder about

?▯ I wonder what did Syedna Hamiduddin see

▯ Usually the deeds that are shameful are considered as dark. What did Syedna Hamiduddin see that made him say that these deeds are going to hinder the ?propagation

▯ The deeds of the true divine Imams can never be dark (shameful). Can al-Hakim be ?considered as a divine Imam

▯ Some of the deeds of al-Hakim were so dark and shameful that Syedna Hamiduddin decided to ignore them and said that we should not consider them as bad deeds. What does this say about al-Hakim? And what does this say about Syedna ?Hamiduddin

.▯ This extract is taken from Dr. Zahid Ali a famous Bohra scholar

▯ True divinely appointed Imams are supposed to be impeccable in character, was al-?Hakim divine

Dr. Zahid Ali says, that the fact that al-Hakim held his court at night for three years is not reported in 'Uyun al-Akhbar' and all the facts that make al-Hakim's character look bad has been omitted from Uyun al- Akhbar. Then Dr. Zahid Ali questions, 'why the author of Uyun al-Akhbar did not

Hamarey Ismaili Madhab Ki Haqeeqat Aur Uska Nizam, p. ۲۳۲ -۱

say anything about these facts?' Dr Zahid Ali further questions, 'Uyun al-Akhbar was meant to be a book for guidance then why does it have a lot of poems in it, which have (no historical significance?'(١)

Something to ponder about

 Al-Hakim held his court at night and that too for three years! This means that he was going against nature; night is meant for resting and one is supposed to work in the ?day. Can a true divine Imam order his subjects to work at night

? What were the other things regarding al-Hakim that Uyun al- Akhbar omitted

? Why did Uyun al-Akhbar omit some of the historical facts

One of al-Hakim's most important acts was the foundation of the Dar al-Hikma (House of Wisdom), in a section of the Fatimid palace in Cairo. Al-Hakim often attended the lectures at the Dar al-Hikma. Some Sunni Jurists too were permitted to teach at the Dar al-Hikma. In ۴۰۰ AH, al-Hakim apparently founded a separate Sunni (institute of learning at Fustat under two Maliki scholars.(٢)

Something to ponder about

 If al-Hakim was an Imam and was in power, then why did he allow Sunni Jurists to speak in Dar ul-Hikma in the Fatimid palace? I would understand if he would let them speak in their own Masajid. Could it be that he wanted to please the Sunnis to stay in power? Could it be that he felt that the Ismailis could gain something from the Jurisprudence of Ahle Sunna? If he was the true divinely appointed Imam then he should himself have

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Hamarey Ismaili Madhab Ki Haqeeqat Aur Uska Nizam, p. ٢٣۴ -١

The Ismailis Their history and doctrines, p. ١٨٩; Note: Extracts from the paragraph -٢ .were brought for brevity

known all the Jurisprudence. Why did he encourage the Sunni Madhab by opening a separate institute of learning? Was it to please them? Imam al-Sadiq (as) had ۴۰۰۰ students but he did not allow the other school of thoughts to teach them, even though he was not in power. The other school of thoughts would come and debate with him .or his students but never did they come to teach

A long list of viziers, commanders and other dignitaries lost their lives at his (al-Hakim's) order, starting with Barjawan and including Fahd Ibn Ibrahim, in addition to a number of concubines and numerous ordinary prisoners. Of the five persons who held the post of chief Dai under al- Hakim, al Husayn b. Ali, al-Numan, his cousin 'Abd al-Aziz b. Muhammed b. al-Numan and Malik b. Sa'id, all three prominent personalities who simultaneously held the prestigious office of Chief Qadi were executed.(۱) Husayn b. Ali Numan and Abd al-Aziz b. Muhammed b al-Numan were from the family of Qadi al-Numan who held a very high position among the Ismailis. Al-Hakim had (them killed.(۲

Something to ponder about

 Why were the chief Dais executed? Why were the concubines executed? Divinely appointed Imams are supposed to be perfectly just so were these people executed ?for just reasons

There occurred several disturbances and open revolts during al- Hakim's caliphate. The most serious of these revolts, which lasted about two years, was that of Abu Rakwa Walid b. Hisham, who claimed to be related to the Umayyads of Spain.... Abu Rakwa was

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۱- The Ismailis Their history and doctrines, p. ۱۹۰; Note: Extracts from the text were .brought for brevity

۲- Ismailiye az Guzashte ta hala, p. ۸۵

executed in Cairo in ۳۹۷ AH/۱۰۰۷ AD. It was during this revolt that al-Hakim decided to adopt more liberal policies, also revising his anti-Sunni measures. (۱)

In the year ۳۹۵ AH, al-Hakim ordered the cursing of the first three caliphs of the Khulafa Rashideen(۲) in the Mosques and the Bazaars. After the revolt of Abu Rakwa in ۳۹۷ AH, al Hakim ordered the cursing of the first three caliphs to stop. In the year ۳۹۹ AH, al-Hakim prohibited the Sunnis from praying 'Taraveeh' in the Holy month of Ramadan and also executed one of the Imams who was leading the Taraveeh prayers. Then in the year ۴۰۸H, he allowed the Sunnis to pray the Taraveeh prayers in the month of Ramadan.(۳)

Something to ponder about

 Why was al-Hakim strict with Sunnis in the first place? He should have let them practice their Madhab. Then when they revolted, he adopted liberal policies and revised his anti-Sunni measures. Why was al-Hakim strict and then later adopted liberal policies? Was he afraid that he would lose his throne? Would a truly and divinely appointed Imam do such a thing? We need to think this out clearly.

Al-Hakim forced the Christians to accept Islam and threatened to kill them if they did not accept Islam. He demolished some famous churches too.(۴)

Something to ponder about

 The teachings of Islam say that there is no compulsion in religion! Islam does not allow the demolition of churches. Then how come al-Hakim ordered this? Can a divinely appointed Imam ever do this kind of act?

In the year

۱- The Ismailis Their history and doctrines, p. ۱۹۰; Note this is not the exact text rather gist of what was written.

۲- The first four Khalifas after the Holy Prophet's (sawa) demise are known as Khulafa

.Rashideen by the Ahle Sunna

Ismailiye az Guzashte ta hala, p. ۸۵; quoted from the book ‘al Kamil’ by ibn al - ۳
.Atheer, vol. ۹, p. ۳۱۶

Ismailiye az Guzashte ta hala, p. ۸۶; quoted from the book ‘Fatimid Dynasty’ by - ۴
Abbas Hamadani, p. ۱۹۰

AH, al-Hakim ordered the demolition of all the churches that were in his kingdom ٣٩٨ and asked the Christians and the Jews to accept Islam. If they refused, then they had to get out of his kingdom and migrate to Rome, some of them migrated, and others that could not do so, accepted Islam, but not with their hearts and souls. In the year ۴٠۴ AH, al-Hakim changed his mind and allowed the Christians to practice their religion in his kingdom. Therefore, the ones who accepted Islam forcibly returned back to (their religion.(١

Something to ponder about

 Can a divinely appointed Imam do these kinds of cruel acts? As per Islam, there is no ?compulsion in religion; would a divinely appointed Imam compel non-Muslims

One of the most distinguishing features of al-Hakim's reign was the adoption of persecutory measures against Christians and Jews. His anti-dhimmi(٢) policy, which took definite shape in the year ٣٩۵ AH/١٠٠۴ AD, was undoubtly partially motivated by the caliph's desire to enhance his popularity amongst the Muslims of Egypt, who had become increasingly antagonistic towards the dhimmi's, under al-Aziz. Furthermore, by directing his anti – Christian measures mainly against the Melkites, he may have wished to win the support of the Copts, who comprised the Christian majority in Egypt. At any event, al-Hakim imposed numerous restrictions on Christians and Jews, who .were obliged to observe Islamic law

A large number of churches and monasteries were demolished; others were converted to mosques, while their properties and revenues were confiscated. Only the monastery of

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Ibid, pp. ٨۶ ٨٧; quoted from the book 'al-Kamil' by ibn al Atheer, vol. ٩, p. ١١۶ -١

The non-Muslims living in a Muslim state need to pay tax and they are exempt from -٢ .participating in wars and battles and they are secure in the Muslim state

Mt. Sinai was spared. In ۴۰۰ AH/۱۰۰۹ AD, al-Hakim even ordered the destruction of the church of the Holy Sepulcher at Jerusalem, an act which greatly anguished the Christians throughout the world and brought to an end the Fatimid-Byzantine truce. In ۴۰۴ AH/۱۰۱۳ AD, al-Hakim allowed those Christians and Jews who had been obliged to embrace Islam to revert to their original faiths, or to migrate to Byzantine territories. Still later, he restored some of the churches and adopted a more tolerant attitude towards the Christians and their religious practices. In the meantime, al-Hakim had maintained his anti-Sunni measures, although at times he intensified them and then had them temporarily revoked. For instance, his order for the denouncement of Abu Bakr, his two successors and others amongst the Sahaba, issued in ۳۹۵ AH and according to which the relevant maledictions were inscribed on the walls of the mosques, was repealed after two years, only to be reintroduced in ۴۰۳ AH/۱۰۱۳ AD.(۱)

Something to ponder about

▯ Islam says: There is no compulsion in religion. Then why did al-Hakim force the Christians and Jews to embrace Islam? Can a person like this be an Imam? Divinely appointed Imams should be impeccable in character and flawless. An Imam should be balanced in character and should not be moody. As per the contents above, al-Hakim seems to be totally unbalanced in character and very moody.

Al-Hakim had developed a strong inclination towards asceticism. In ۴۰۳ AH/۱۰۱۲-۱۰۱۳ AD, al-Hakim forbade his subjects from prostrating before him; he also dressed simply and

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۱- The Ismailis Their history and doctrines, p. ۱۸۹; Note: Only some extracts were used and not the whole Paragraph.

(rode on a donkey.(١

Some things to ponder about

 This means that al-Hakim had them prostrating to him for about ١۶ years, as he was the Caliph since ٩٩۶ AD! Does this also mean that the Fatimid Imams (rulers) before al-Hakim had their subjects prostrate to them too? The history says al-Hakim forbade his subjects from prostrating in the year ١٠١٢-١٠١٣ AD? Can we expect the truly and divinely appointed Imams ever allow their subjects to prostrate to them? We really need to clearly think about this matter and see if we are following and believing in the .right Imams

 Also, history says that al-Hakim developed a strong inclination towards asceticism! This means that he was extravagant and led a life of luxury. Later, after sixteen years of his caliphate, he started inclining towards asceticism. If al-Hakim was an ordinary .king, then I would understand, but he is believed by the Ismailis as an Imam

 Al-Hakim was ١١ years old when he became an Imam. The Ismailis accept him as an Imam when he was ١١ yrs and had not yet reached puberty, but they object to the Imamate of Imam Muhammad Jawad (as), the ninth Imam of the Ithna Ashari Shias, .because he was about ٩ years old when he became an Imam

Al-Hakim's death and ascension of Abul Hasan Ali al-Zahir li I'zaz din Allah (d ۴٢٧ (AH/١٠٣۶ AD) (٧th Fatimid Caliph) (١٧th Ismaili Imam

point

In ۴٠۴ AH/١٠١٣ AD, al-Hakim made yet another unprecedented decision in appointing Abd al-Rahman b. Ilyas b. Ahmed, a great grandson of Ubaydallah al-Mahdi, as his 'Wali al Ahd'(٢) to the exclusion of his own son Ali. Thereupon, al-Hakim delegated all the affairs of

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ibid, p. ١٩۵ -١

٢- Successor, Crown Prince

state, at least for some time, to his heir apparent, who attended the official ceremonies and later also became the governor of Damascus.(١) After the death of al-Hakim, according to one plausible version, he (Hakim) was assassinated by his scheming sister Sitta al-Mulk, because her own life was threatened by the caliph. Sitta al-Mulk had al-Hakim's only son Abul Hasan Ali, then only sixteen years old, proclaimed as Imam and Caliph with the title of al-Zahir li I'zaz Din Allah.(٢) The shrewd Sitta al-Mulk became regent. It may be added that henceforth, the Fatimid throne always fell to children or youths; while regents, viziers or generals held the actual reign of power for extended periods.(٣)

Some questions to raise ponder about

 Who gave the right to Sitta al-Mulk to proclaim al-Zahir as Imam? Al-Hakim had already appointed Abd al-Rahman as his successor and it is recorded in history, even though Abd al-Rahman was not his son! But after his death, al-Zahir was placed on the throne! If al-Hakim, the Fatimid Imam, wanted Abd al-Rahman to succeed him, then why was al-Zahir placed on the throne and called an Imam? The Ismailis follow al-Zahir as an Imam, even though al- Hakim, their own Imam, appointed Abd al-Rahman as his successor! Why? The Ismailis should have obeyed their imam.

 History says that al-Hakim had delegated all of the affairs of the state to Abd al-Rahman, at least for some time. Abd al-Rahman used to attend the official ceremonies too. This means the matter was not a secret, then why did

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١- The Ismailis Their history and doctrines, p. ١٩٥

٢- The Ismailis Their history and doctrines, p. ٢٠٠; Zahid Ali, Tarikh vol. ١, pp. ٢٦٢-٢٧٢. Note: Gist of the text was used for brevity.

٣- The Ismailis Their history and doctrines, p. ٢٠٠

!the people take al-Zahir as the next Imam? There is something wrong here

 All of the Fatimid caliphs Imams, starting from al- Zahir were little children or youth. Hence, the reign of power was in the hands of regents and viziers or generals, why? A divinely appointed Imam should be able to handle these things, if he is divinely appointed, even if he is a child! We need to clearly think this matter out. Are the ?Ismailis following the right Imams? Were they really divinely appointed

 Also, why did al-Hakim appoint Abd al-Rahman? Abd al-Rahman was not his son, so ?why did he appoint him when he should have appointed his son

Sitta al-Mulk, who is given various other names by the chroniclers, ruled efficiently for more than three years until her death in ۴۱۵ AH/۱۰۲۴ AD.(۱)

Something to ponder about

 Why did Sitta rule? Was al-Zahir, the Imam, not competent? An Imam should be competent enough, and that too at the age of ۱۶. He should have been able to handle ?the kingdom. He was at the mercy of Sitta al-Mulk! Why

At the beginning of her (Sitta al-Mulk) regency, she managed to have 'Abd al-Rahman, al-Hakim's heir designate, who had meanwhile revolted in Damascus, arrested and brought to Cairo, where he was imprisoned and murdered shortly before Sitta al-Mulk's own death.(۲)

Something to ponder about

 Abd al-Rahman, al-Hakim's heir designate was killed! He was supposed to be the next Imam because al-Hakim, the Fatimid Imam, appointed him! What happened? Why do not the Ismailis believe in Abd al-Rahman as their

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۱- Ibid., p. ۲۰۱

۲- The Ismailis Their history and doctrines, p. ۲۰۱

?Imam? Why did they go for the ruler al- Zahir

Abu Tamim Ma'add al-Mustansir Billah (d ۴۸۷ AH/۱۰۹۴ AD)lxix (۸th Fatimid Caliph) (۱۸th (Ismaili Imam

point

Al-Zahir died of plague in his early thirties in Sha'ban ۴۲۷ AH/June ۱۰۳۶ AD, after ruling for fifteen years. Al-Zahir was succeeded by his seven-year-old son, Abu Tamim Ma'add, who adopted the title of al-Mustansir Billah. He had been designated as the (crown prince at the age of eight months, in ۴۲۱ AH/۱۰۳۰ AD.(۱

Al-Mustansir's caliphate lasting almost sixty lunar years (۴۲۷-۴۸۷ AH/۱۰۳۶-۱۰۹۴ AD), was the longest of his dynasty. During the first nine years of al-Mustansir's reign, real political authority remained in the hands of al-Jarjarai, who had retained the vizierate, while al- Mustansir's mother, a Sudani, had started her regency and continually intrigued behind the scenes. On al-Jarjarai's death in ۴۳۶H/۱۰۴۴ all power was seized and maintained for a long time by the queen mother, who had kept close relations with Abu Sa'd al-Tustari, a Jewish merchant who had originally brought her to Egypt. Under the influence of Abu Sa'd, she now appointed a renegade Jew, Sadaqa b. Yusuf, (to the vizierate.(۲

Something to ponder about

 A divinely appointed Imam does not need any regent; Why, during the first nine years of al-Mustansir's caliphate, did he not have any say in the kingdom? Can we ?expect this from a divinely appointed Imam

Starting with al-Hakim, however, the Fatimid sovereign was usually a minor at the time of his accession to the throne, and therefore, often a regent or a vizier held the real reins of power in the state. From ۴۶۶ AH/۱۰۷۴ AD, when Badr al-Jamali

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The Ismailis their history and doctrines, p. ۲۰۲; on the reign of Mustansir see 'al - ۱

Kamil' by ibn al Atheer vol. ٩, pp. ١٥٤-١٥٥ and 'Tarikh' by Zahid Ali vol. ١, pp. ٢٧٣-٣٢٣

٢- The Ismailis their history and doctrines, p. ٢٠٢; Note: Extracts were taken and not the whole text for brevity

arrived in Egypt and became the all-powerful vizier, the authority of the caliph-imam was reduced drastically, and the Fatimid rulers became, in effect, mere figureheads and puppets in the hands of their viziers, henceforth, the real masters of the Fatimid (state.(١

Something to ponder about

 How can an Imam be a puppet in the hands of a vizier? An Imam should be a servant of Allah (swt) and obey Allah (swt) and no one else. An Imam should take .(orders and be under the command of only Allah (swt

From Badr al-Jamali onwards, the Fatimid vizier obtained full powers from his sovereign and was called wazir al-tawfid, or vizier with delegated powers. As this latter type of vizier, acting independently, was normally of military status, he was called 'Vizier of the Pen and of the Sword', or simply 'Vizier of the Sword' (wazir al-sayf). He was not only the commander of the armies (amir al-Juyush) and the effective head of the civil bureaucracy, but often also the head of the religious hierarchy. A distinguished feature of the Fatimid vizierate, whose occupants were changed frequently, is that several viziers were Christians, serving sovereigns who regarded themselves as the rightful leaders of the Muslims throughout the world. In later Fatimid times, this position came to be held by yet other Christians, notably the Armenian general Bahram (d. ۵۳۵ AH/۱۱۴۰ AD), who was 'Vizier of the Sword' during (۵۲۹-۵۳۱ AH/۱۱۳۵-۱۱۳۷ AD, and also bore the title of Sayf al Islam.(٢

Somethings to ponder about

? How can non-Muslims be the head of the religious hierarchy

The Ismailis their history and doctrines, pp. ۲۲۲ ۲۲۳ -١

Ibid, pp. ۲۲۲ ۲۲۳; quoted from Canard, 'Notes sur les Armeniens en Egypt a l'epoque -٢ Fatimite', AIEO, ۱۳ (۱۹۵۵), p. ۱۴۳-۱۵۷. Note: Some extracts were written for brevity

?□ Honestly, were these Imams divinely appointed or were they after power

?'□ How can a Christian Armenian General be given a title of 'Sayf al-Islam

Al-Mustansir's death marked the end of the 'classical' Fatimid period. After al-Mustansir, there was a dispute over his succession, which was the greatest internal crisis of the Fatimid dynasty and revolved around the claims of al-Mustansir's sons Nizar and al-Mustali, causing a major split in Fatimid Ismailism. This schism, as a result of which the Fatimid Ismailis became divided into two rival wings, the Mustaliyya (Mustalians) and the Nizariyya, proved to have a drastic and lasting (consequence for the future course of the Ismaili movement.(۱

Following the death of the Fatimid Caliph, al-Mustansir Billah in ۴۸۷ AH (۱۰۹۴), the older son Nizar, and the younger son Mustali fought for the empire. Nizar was defeated and was jailed, but his son escaped. A group of people started believing him to be the Imam, and the Imamate of the Nizaris continues to the present Imam Aga Khan IV. The term Ismailis is referred to the Nizari community, who is followers of the Aga .Khan, and is the largest group among the Ismailis

The Agha Khanis, or the Nizaris, consider Imam Ali (as) as the first Imam and Imam .Husayn (as) as the second Imam - they do not consider Imam Hasan (as) as an Imam

Al-Mustali was the younger son of al-Mustansir Billah. He succeeded in defeating Nizar. The followers of Mustali line are also known as Taiyyebis, named after the ۲۱st

p: ۳۷

Ibid, p. ۲۲۲ -۱

Imam, Imam al-Taiyyeb, who went into hiding. The Taiyyebi's further split into different sects, like Dawoodi Bohras, Sulaymani Bohras, Alavi Bohras and Hebtiah ...Bohras etc

The Bohras consider Imam Ali (as) as the Wasi of the Prophet (sawa), hence Imam .Hasan (as) is the first Imam for the Bohras

As per the Ismaili Taiyebi sect (Bohra Madhab), it is believed by them that al-Tayyib went into hiding. However, not a single hadith is found from the Holy Prophet (sawa) or the rightful Imams saying anything regarding al-Taiyyeb. On the other hand, several ahadith are found regarding al-Mahdi, the twelfth Imam of the Shias who is in .occultation, not only in Shia books but also in the books of the brothers of Ahle Sunna

Following the 'Right' Imam

Importance of following the 'Right' chain

First of all, we all accept that we are the slaves (Ibaad) of Allah (swt). As Muslims, we must submit and obey Him, as He is our Master. We know that as Muslims, we must believe in all of the Prophets and all of the books that were sent by Allah (swt) in order to be Muslims. If one believes in some Prophets only, then he is not a Muslim. For example if one does not believe in Yusuf (as) or Nuh (as), then he is not a Muslim. In other words, we must believe in all the Prophets in order to be a Muslim, whether we know all of their names or not. In Quran, only a few names of the prophets are .mentioned

The

.Holy Quran informs us only about some of the Prophets

:Quran clearly says in Surah Ghafir verse ۷۸

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ‌ُمْ مَّنْ قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْ‌ُمْ مَّنْ لَّمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ

Certainly We have sent apostles before you. Of them are those We have recounted“ (to you and of them are those We have not recounted to you....”(۱

In order to be a Muslim, one must believe in all the prophets, the whole chain of .prophets; one cannot pick and choose and only believe in some

As Muslims, we believe that the last messenger of Allah (swt) was our Holy Prophet (sawa) and there are not going to be any more prophets after him. Does this mean ?(that there is no divine guidance after the Holy prophet (sawa

?After the Holy Prophet (sawa) what

As Muslims, we believe that Allah (swt) has never left humanity without a divinely .appointed guide as His representative on earth

,Holy Quran, Surah Ra'ad verse ۷ says

وَّلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ ادٍ ۷

(There is a guide for every nation.(۲

?(Who is the guide after the demise of the last messenger of Allah (swt

The Shias believe that an Imam is the guide after the demise of the Holy Prophet (sawa). As per the belief of the Ithna Ashari Shias (The Twelvers), the Holy Imams, the successors of the Holy Prophet (sawa), are divinely appointed and are infallible. Shias believe that Imamate is one of the Usool e Deen(۳); it is an essential part of the .religion

Imamate, as per the Twelvers, has all the characteristics of prophethood, except that

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Surah Ghafir (۴۰), Ayah ۷۸ -۱

Surah Ra’ad (۱۳), Ayah ۷ -۲

Roots of religion -۳

the Imams do not bring any changes in the religion. They preserve the religion that was brought by the Holy Prophet (sawa), and they need to be obeyed at the same .(level as we obey the Holy Prophet (sawa

:The Holy Quran Surah Nisa verse ٥٩ says

يٰاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوا الرَّسُوْلَ وَاُولِى الْاَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

O you who have faith! Obey Allah and Obey the Apostle and those vested with“ (authority among you”.(١

This verse obliges the Muslims to obey three entities: First, to obey Allah; second, to obey Messenger and those vested with authority (Ulil-Amr). The arrangement of the words shows that the obedience of Ulil-Amr is as much obligatory as is the obedience of the Messenger because Quran uses just one verb for both of them without repeating the verb again. Naturally, it means that Ulil-Amr should be of the same importance as the Messenger in terms of obedience to them; otherwise, Allah would .not have joined them together in this verse under one verb

It is interesting to note that Allah (swt) uses a separate verb for Himself before mentioning the Messenger and Ulil-Amr, which shows that Allah has higher authority than that of the Messenger and Ulil-Amr. It is also clear from the above verse that Ulil-Amr does not mean messengers, Ulil-Amr and the Messengers are not the same. Otherwise, Allah would only have said: "Obey Allah, and Obey Messenger only." But He added Ulil-Amr (those who are given authority by Allah). This is one

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Surah Nisa (٤), Ayah ٥٩ -١

of the places where the concept of Imamate and the necessity of obedience to them (come from.(1)

The brothers of Ahle Sunna (the Sunnis) translate this word Ulil-Amr as rulers because the rulers have authority over their subjects. But this translation makes the ruler come and stand on the same platform as of the Holy Prophet (sawa), because as per Arabic grammar, the ayah uses one verb for the Prophet and Ulil-Amr. This cannot be possible because the rulers tend to sin and oppress. The Holy Prophet (sawa) never sinned, and the Ulil-Amr (the ones vested with authority) also cannot sin. Why? Simply because if Allah wants us to follow and obey someone, then He cannot obviously order us to obey sinners. So, as per the Shia belief, the word Ulil-Amr in this ayah is .referring to the infallible/sinless Imams

As per the ayah Surah Nisa ayah ۵۹, it is the command of Allah (swt) to obey Him and obey the Holy Prophet (sawa) and the Ulil-Amr (those vested with authority). Shias say .that the Ulil-Amr are the infallible Imams

'Need to follow all the 'Rightful Imams

There is a famous Hadith of the Prophet (sawa) "Whoever dies without knowing his Imam dies a death of ignorance".(2) Imam al-Baqir (as) also said something similar, the gist of what he said; whoever dies without having an Imam dies a death of a (nonbeliever and a hypocrite.(3)

Now, since we believe in the concept of Imamate, we need to follow the right chain of Imams, the ones that are divinely appointed

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۱ - The status of the Holy Prophet (sawa) was much higher than our Imams, the rightful successors to him. Please do not misunderstand me, as far as obedience to them is concerned, we are required to obey them equally, as per the ayah

۲- Al-Hilali, Sulaym ibn Qays Kitab Sulaym ibn Qays Al-Hilali, vol. ۲, p. ۹۳۲, H. ۷۱

۳- Al-Kafi, vol. ۱, p. ۱۸۳, H. ۸

by Allah (swt)... Otherwise, if we follow any leader /guide without doing any research, .we will end up going astray

One might say, “I believe in Imamate. To me, it does not matter if the imams were ۱۲ or ۲۱ or ۴۹, as long as I am a good person and I pray five times a day, etc....” This is wrong! Why? This is because we need to believe and have faith in the right chain of all the prophets and the imams. This is a very serious condition! For instance, if a person says, “We believe in prophethood, but we do not follow the prophets after Prophet Moses (as), it is the same thing, and it does not matter.” This person is not a believer .(then, as he refuses to accept the Prophets after Prophet Moses (as

Now, if a Muslim says, “I believe in all the prophets; I believe in Allah (swt), and that He is one, I believe in the last messenger, Holy Prophet Muhammad (sawa), and I believe in Quran. That is all I need, and I do not care about the other disputed issues.” Will this ?justification carry any weight on the Day of Judgment

Satan worshipped Allah (swt) for thousands of years, and disobeyed Allah (swt) only once by saying that he will not prostrate to Adam (as). Just because of one act of disobedience, he was thrown out of the kingdom of mercy. So the ones who claim that prayers are enough, should know

that Satan worshipped Allah (swt) so much that Allah moved him up, brought him and placed him above the ranks of Angels. Then after all of that worship, just because of one act of disobedience, he was thrown out of the kingdom of mercy. We should not forget that we are the slaves of Allah. We need to obey and worship Him the way HE wants us to, not the way we like. A slave should submit totally. Allah (swt), in Surah Nisa Ayah ۵۹, is clearly ordering us to obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those ... vested with authority

Going back to our discussion, In order to be Momins (True faithful believers), we need to believe and follow the whole chain of the Imams. Like in the case of the Prophets, we also must believe and follow all the rightful Imams. The question that arises now is, how many Imams? Who are the rightful Imams? Who are the Imams who are ?vested with authority

?Who are the rightful Imams

Let us look into Imams: let us see if there are any ahadith (traditions of the Prophet) .regarding the number of Imams who will succeed the prophets

A number of ahadith (traditions) are found in the books of Shias, and surprisingly enough in the books of Sunni brothers too, that say that the Holy Prophet (sawa) had said that there would be twelve Khulafa (Successors) after him. This hadith matches the belief of the Ithna Ashari Shias, but does not match the belief of

the Sunni brothers. Yet, at least a few ahadith of this kind are found in the books of .Sunni brothers

Not a single hadith is found where the Holy Prophet (sawa) ever said that he will have ٢١ Imams after him, or ٤٩ Imams after him! This is a challenge if one can find one .(authentic hadith regarding ٢١ Imams (Bohra belief) or ٤٩ Imams (Agha Khani belief

Since the Shia books will, of course, have the twelve Imams mentioned, allow me to :quote a couple of ahadith from the books of Sunni brothers

,Narrated Jabir Ibn Samura: I heard the Prophet saying

There will be twelve commanders (Amir)." He then said a sentence which I did not" (hear. My father said, the Prophet added, "All of them will be from Quraish."(١

:The Prophet (sawa) said

(There shall be twelve Caliphs for this community, all of them from Quraish." (٢"

:Narrated Jabir Ibn Samura: The Prophet (sawa) said

The matter (life) will not end, until it is passed by twelve Caliphs." He then whispered" a sentence. I asked my father what the Prophet said. He said, the Prophet added: "All (of them will be from Quraish."(٣

The above traditions that I quoted are from the books that are deemed as very authentic by the Sunni brothers, especially 'Sahih al-Muslim' and 'Sahih al-Bukhari', which are considered to be the most authentic after the Holy Quran by the brothers of .Ahle Sunna

We have traditions where the Prophet (sawa) indicates the names of his ١٢ successors, one

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(Sahih al-Bukhari Hadith: ٩.٣٢٩ (Arabic-English version -١

Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, vol. ۵, p. ۱۰۶ -۲

Sahih Muslim, Arabic version, Kitab al-Imaara, ۱۹۸۰ Edition Pub. In Saudi Arabia, vol. -۳ ۳, p. ۱۴۵۲, Tradition ۵. Sahih Muslim, English version, Chapter DCCLIV (titled: The People are subservient to the Quraish and the Caliphate is the Right of the Quraish), vol. ۳, p. ۱۰۰۹, Tradition ۴۴۷۷

after another - they match the Ithna Ashari (The Twelvers) Shia belief. However, I .think that these three traditions above are sufficient to prove my point

?'Who are the 'Twelve Caliphs

?Now a question arises, who are the ۱۲ caliphs/leaders/imams

Obviously, the above traditions do not fit the first four Caliphs (as per the belief of Sunni brothers), since they were less than twelve. The belief of our Sunni brothers .(does not match with the hadith of our Holy Prophet (sawa

And the Umayyad Caliphs were more than twelve and almost all of them were oppressors, so they cannot be applied to them. Also, they cannot be applied to the Abbasid Caliphs, because they were more than twelve; they were tyrants too; and they persecuted the descendants of the Prophet everywhere, meaning that they did not comply with the Quranic verse: "I don't ask you any wage except to love my (family."(۱

The ahadith (traditions) about twelve successors that we talked about earlier are found in the books that are claimed by the Sunni brothers as the most authentic books after the Holy Quran. The ahadith clearly state that there will be ۱۲ successors of the Holy Prophet (sawa) and the scholars of Ahle Sunna do consider these traditions authentic. This is why they tried their level best to come up with the number twelve, .but unfortunately, they all differed in their opinion

:(As per Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (Great Sunni Scholar

There are only twelve Caliphs until the Day of Judgement. And they will continue to act on truth, even

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Surah Shura (۴۲), Ayah ۲۳ -۱

.if they are not continuous

We see that from the twelve, four are the Righteous Caliphs, then Hasan, then Muawiyah, then Ibn Zubayr, and finally 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz. They are eight. Four of them remain. Maybe Mahdi, the Abbasid could be included as he is an Abbasid like 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz was an Umayyad, and Tahir 'Abbasi will also be included because he was a just ruler. Thus two more are yet to come. One of them is Mahdi, (because he is from the AhlulBayt (as).(١

:(As per Ibn al-Jawzi (Sunni Scholar

The first Caliph of Bani Umayya was Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah and the last, Marwan al-Himar. Their total is thirteen. 'Uthman, Mu'awiyah and ibn Zubayr are not included as .(they were among the Companions of the Holy Prophet (s

If we exclude Marwan bin al-Hakam because of the controversy about his being a Companion, or that he was in power, even though Abdullah ibn Zubayr had the (support of the people. Then we can get the figure of Twelve. ...(٢

:As per Al-Bayhaqi another Sunni scholar

This number (twelve) is found till the period of Walid ibn 'Abd al-Malik. After this, there was chaos and disturbance. Then came the Abbasid dynasty. This report has increased the number of Imams. If we neglect some of their characteristics which (came after the disturbance, then their number will be much higher."(٣

:As per Ibn Kathir another Sunni scholar

Whosoever follows Bayhaqi and agrees with his assertion that Jama'ah means those Caliphs who came intermittently till the time of Walid ibn Yazid ibn 'Abd al-Malik, the transgressor comes under the

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Al-Suyuti, Tarikh al-Khulafa, p. ١٢ -١

٢ - Ibn al-Jawzi, Kashf al-Mushkil, as quoted in Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Fath al-Bari ١٦:٣٤٠ from Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi

٣- Ibn Kathir, Ta'rikh, ٦:٢٤٩; Al-Suyuti, Tarikh al-Khulafa, p. ١١

.purview of the tradition quoted by us criticising and denouncing such people

And if we accept the Caliphate of Ibn Zubayr before 'Abd al-Malik, the total shall be sixteen, whereas their total should be twelve before 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz. In this method, Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah will be included, and not 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz. However, it is established that the majority of the 'ulama accept 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz as a truthful and a just Caliph.(۱)

It could be concluded that the Sunni scholars did take seriously the traditions of the Holy Prophet (sawa) regarding him having twelve successors after him. This is why they tried their level best to come up with twelve successors. The traditions regarding twelve successors are found in the books of Ithna Ashari Shias too, and they match with their belief of twelve Imams. When one looks into the lives of the twelve Imams that the Ithna Ashari Shias (Twelvers) follow, they have led impeccable lives and their traditions are full of wisdom. They were all martyred, except the last Imam, Imam Mahdi (atfs), who went into occultation.

Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) the twelfth Holy Imam of the Twelvers

Regarding al-Mahdi, the twelfth Imam of the Ithna Ashari Shias, there are many traditions that are found in Shia books and in the books of Ahle Sunna. Some of them are as follows:

The Prophet (sawa) said:

"Al-Mahdi is one of us, the members of the household (Ahlul-Bayt)."(۲)

It is evident from the above tradition that Imam al-Mahdi (as) is from the Ahlul-Bayt of Prophet Muhammad. The following tradition clearly mentions that Imam

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۱- Ibn Kathir, Ta'rikh, ۶:۲۴۹-۲۵۰

۲- Sunan Ibn Majah, vol. ۲, Tradition ۴۰۸۵

:(al-Mahdi is one of descendants of the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (sawa

:The Prophet (sawa) said

The Mahdi will be of my family, of the descendants of Fatimah (the Holy Prophet's (daughter). (1)

:Another hadith

:The Prophet (sawa) said

Even if the entire duration of the world's existence has already been exhausted and" only one day is left (before the day of judgment), Allah will expand that day to such a length of time, as to accommodate the kingdom of a person from my Ahlul-Bayt, who will be called by my name.(2) He will fill out the earth with peace and justice as it will (have been full of injustice and tyranny (by then)."(3

:Another Hadith

:(The Messenger of Allah (sawa) said to Ali (as

An issue will be born to you whom I have gifted him with my name and my" (nickname."(4

Look at all these references where these ahadith /traditions are found. There are .more, but I think this is sufficient to make my point

The interesting thing is that these ahadith are found in the well-known books of our Sunni brothers. They do not believe in Imamate, and yet, they believe that Imam Mahdi (as) will come. I would like to pose this question to the brothers of Ahle Sunna: "If you believe that Quran and Hadith are enough, and you do not need an Imam after the Holy Prophet (sawa), then why are you too waiting for Imam Mahdi (as)?" Then, I would like to add, 'Your books have all kinds of

۱- Sunan Abu Dawud, English version, Ch. ۳۶, Tradition ۴۲۷۱ (narrated by Umm Salama, the wife of the Prophet); Sunan Ibn Majah, vol. ۲, Tradition ۴۰۸۶; al-Nisa'i and al-Bayhaqi; al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. ۱۱, section ۱, p. ۲۴۹

۲- The actual name of the twelfth Imam is Muhammed his title is Al Mahdi, Al Qaim.

۳- Sahih al-Tirmidhi, vol. ۲, p. ۸۶, vol. ۹, pp. ۷۴-۷۵; Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. ۲, p. ۷; Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, vol. ۱, pp. ۸۴,۳۷۶; vol. ۳, p. ۶۳; al-Mustadrak ala al-Sahihayn, by al-Hakim, vol. ۴, p. ۵۵۷; Jami' al-Saghir, by al-Suyuti, pp. ۲, ۱۶۰; al-Arful Wardi, by al-Suyuti, p. ۲; al-Majma', by al-Tabarani, p. ۲۱۷; Tahzeeb al-Tahzeeb, by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, vol. ۹, p. ۱۴۴; Fat'h al-Bari fi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari, by Ibn Hajar Asqalani, vol. ۷, p. ۳۰۵; al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. ۱۱, section ۱, p. ۲۴۹; al-Tathkirah, by al-Qurtubi, p. ۶۱۷;al-Hawi, by al-Suyuti, vol. ۲, pp. ۱۶۵-۱۶۶; Sharh al-Mawahib al-Ladunniyyah, by al-Zurqani, vol. ۵, p. ۳۴۸; Fat'h al-Mugheeth, by al-Sakhawi, vol. ۳, p. ۴۱; Kanz al-Ummal, vol. ۷, p. ۱۸۶; Iqd al-Durar Fi Akhbar al-Mahdi al-Muntadhar, vol. ۱۲, Ch. ۱; al-Bayan fi Akhbar Sahib al-Zaman, By Ganji al-Shafi'i, Ch. ۱۲; al-Fusool al-Muhimmah, by Ibn Sabbagh al-Maliki, Ch. ۱۲; Arjahul Matalib, by Ubaidallah Hindi al-Hanafi, p. ۳۸۰; Muqaddimah, by Ibn Khaldoon, p. ۲۶۶; and also in the works of Ibn Habban, Abu Nua'ym, Ibn Asakir, etc.

۴- Sahih al-Tirmidhi, vol. ۵, p. ۱۳۷; Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. ۴, p. ۲۹۲; al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, vol. ۴, p. ۲۷۸ who said it is authentic based on the criteria of the two Shaikhs (i.e., al-Bukhari and Muslim); Ma'arifat Ulum al-Hadith, by al-Hakim, p. ۱۸۹; Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, vol. ۱, p. ۹۵; Fadha'il al-Sahaba, by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, vol. ۲, p. ۶۷۶, Tradition ۱۱۵۵; al-Tabaqat, by Ibn Sa'd, vol. ۵, p. ۹۱

."ahadith regarding Imam Mahdi (as), so you cannot deny this fact

Some people find it hard to believe how Imam Mahdi (as) can still be alive. How can a person live for so long? They find this concept unbelievable. Well, it is possible if Allah wishes. There are many incredible stories in Quran, which of course are all true and we are obliged to believe in them. For example: Quran states that Prophet Noah (as) preached for ۹۵۰ years (Just imagine how many years he might have lived, as per ahadith he lived ۲۵۰۰ years!).(۱) Quran speaks about the people of the cave - they slept in the cave for ۳۰۹ years! (۲) Prophet Jesus (as) spoke when he was a baby(۳), as per Quran. Furthermore, we have the story of Prophet Uzair(۴) who was dead for ۱۰۰ years and then was brought back to life. He also saw his donkey come back to life again, all by the leave of Allah (swt).(۵) Prophet Jesus (as) is still alive(۶) and is more than ۲۰۰۰ years old, and will come back. There are many more stories that are incredible in Quran that we believe in. If Allah (swt) wishes, then anything is possible, .(hence, one should not doubt about the long life of Imam Mahdi (atfs

As per the traditions, it could further be proven that the Ithna Ashari Imams are the rightful chain of Imams. All the traditions found in the books of Ahle Sunna and the Shia books say that

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Holy Quran, Suratul Ankabut ayah ۱۴ talks about it -۱

Holy Quran, Suratul Kahf ayah ۲۵ talks about it -۲

.Holy Quran, Suratul Maryam ayahs ۳۰-۳۳ talk about it -۳

Biblical name Ezra -۴

Holy Quran, Suratul Baqarah (۲), Ayah ۲۵۹ -۵

Holy Quran, Suratun Nisa (۴), Ayahs ۱۵۷ and ۱۵۸ talks about it, it says that they say -۶ .they killed Jesus but they did not

the Holy Prophet (sawa) will have twelve successors. As discussed earlier, the Agha Khani Ismaili Imams are ۴۹ and the Bohra Ismaili Imams are ۲۱ therefore these .(numbers do not match the traditions of the Holy Prophet (sawa

Kind of lifestyle and characteristics expected from an Imam

point

Suppose one might say that I do not believe in the traditions found in the books of Ithna Ashari Shias nor the books of Ahle Sunna. Then in this scenario, what should be the criteria for a good role model as a leader? What characteristics should a good leader have? We follow the Imams so that they lead us towards the right path, the path of the Holy Prophet (sawa). Therefore, these Imams should have some .(impeccable qualities in order to be the successors of the Holy Prophet (sawa

We have already discussed the lifestyles of some of the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams. Now I would like to shed some light on two of the Ithna Ashari Imams after Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) after which the split of sects took place, so the reader could compare on the huge difference between the personalities which each of the sects took as their .leaders

.Imam Musa al-Kadhim ibn Jafar (as) Martyred ۱۸۳ AH/۷۹۹ AD

point

Imam Musa al-Kadhim was the son of Imam al-Sadiq (as) and was born in Abwaa on the ۷th of Safar ۱۲۸ AH/۷۴۵ AD. Imam al-Sadiq (as) and his honorable wife were returning from Hajj and on their way back Imam Musa al-Kadhim was born in Abwaa, a city located in between Mecca and Medina. He was named Musa and al-Kadhim is the title

given to him that means the one who swallows anger, his other titles include: Abd-e-Salih, Ameen, and Babul Hawaij. The title Babul Hawaij was given to him because of all the miraculous healings and extraordinary events that have been witnessed in his shrine in Baghdad for centuries. There are books written on this subject that narrate the eyewitness accounts of the miraculous healings that took place in his shrine. One of the Imams of Ahle Sunna, Imam al-Shafi' said, 'the tomb of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) is proven effective for fulfilling wishes.'(۱) Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) is also known by Kunyas (nicknames) like: Abul Hasan Awwal, Abul Hasan Madhi, and Abu .Ibrahim

His life in a nutshell

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) was born in ۱۲۸ AH during the reign of Marwan Himar. After three years, his dynastic rule came to an end and the first ruler of Bani Abbas ascended to the throne. He ruled from ۱۳۲ to ۱۳۶ AH, when Mansur Dawaniqi succeeded him, who got Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) assassinated through poison in ۱۴۸ AH and the Imamate of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) began from the age of twenty years. In the year ۱۵۸ AH Mansur was succeeded by Mahdi Abbasi, who ruled for ten years and in ۱۶۹ AH he was succeeded by Hadi, who could not remain in power for more than a year. In ۱۷۰ AH Harun came to the throne who had Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) assassinated through poison in ۱۸۳ AH. At that time, the age of the Imam

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۱- Jawadi, Allamah Zeeshan Haider, Nuqoosh Ismat, p. ۵۹۹ quotes from Matalibus So-ool, p. ۲۷۸; Sawaiqul Mohriqa, p. ۱۳۱; Manaqib, vol. ۳, p. ۱۲۵

was fifty-five years, of which twenty years passed under the care of his father and .then he held the position of Imamate for a period of thirty-five years

(The childhood of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) since his childhood had all the traits of being the successor :of Imam al-Sadiq (as) as he had many extraordinary traits, to list a few

When Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) was only ۵ years old, Abu Hanifa came to visit Imam :al-Sadiq (as), and he saw Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as), so he narrates

I, Abu Hanifa, asked him (Imam al-Kadhim), about the source of the acts of disobedience to Allah, he (as) answered: the source of any sin is unquestionably one of the three: either Allah makes man do them, or Allah and the servant are both responsible, or the servant alone is responsible. If Allah is the source of sins (which certainly He is not) then it is improper for Him to punish the servants for that which they did not commit. If Allah and the servants are together responsible for the sins (this cannot be true either) then it is improper for the stronger partner to wrong the weak partner. And if the servant is responsible for his sins (and this is true), then the Lord may pardon him or punish him for the commitment of such a sin. After I had heard so, I left before I could meet Abu-Abdillah (Imam al-Sadiq) since those words (were sufficient for me.(۱

It is interesting to note that the fact that this

۱- Nuqoosh Ismat, p. ۶۰۰, quotes from Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. ۱۱, p. ۱۸۵; Amali, Sayyid Murtada, vol. ۱, p. ۱۵۱; Ihtijaj Tabarsi, p. ۱۹۸; Manaqib, vol. ۳, p. ۴۲۹

belief in predestination is something the tyrant rulers made up, they wanted to justify their crimes by means of this belief; their goal was that the people should consider them as being given power through destiny and that people should not question their .authority

In another incident, Abu Hanifa once came to see Imam al-Sadiq (as) and when he saw the young boy (Imam al-Kadhim), he asked a question to him (as). He asked: If a person visits your town then where should he go to answer the call of nature? Imam al-Kadhim (as) replied: He should take the support of the rear walls, keep away from the view of neighbors, remain aloof from river banks, avoid the shade of the fruit bearing trees, stay away from the courtyards and streets, leave the mosques, refrain from facing Ka'aba or keeping his back to it, he should take care of his garments, and sit down wherever he likes. Abu Hanifa asked the boy, 'What is your name?' The little boy replied, 'I am Musa Ibn Jafar ibn Muhammad.' Abu Hanifa was astounded by this reply coming from a young boy, so his companion Abdullah Ibn Muslim said, 'Did I not tell you that even the children from the family of prophet are different from ordinary children?' (١)

(The designation (Nass

point

There are many ahadith in the books of Ithna Ashari Shias where Imam al-Sadiq (as) had specifically announced the Imamate of Imam Musa al-Kadhim after him, in front of his companions. I would like to list

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Tohaf ul Uqool, p. ۴۱۱; Nuqoosh Ismat, p. ۶۰۲ -١

:a few

 Mufaddal Ibn Umar Jofi (known for his reliability) narrates: He asked Imam al-Sadiq ((as) about the Imam after him, Imam (as) replied: My son Musa.(۱)

 Yazid Ibn Sulait (known for his piety) narrates: He met Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) on the way to Mecca and said: May my parents be sacrificed on you; you are an Imam, but no one is exempt from death; thus if something happens to you, who will be the Imam? Imam (as) gestured to his son, Musa, and said: He is having all the good qualities like knowledge, wisdom, understanding, generosity, cognition of Islamic law, good nature, good behavior to relatives. He is a door of mercy and is having another excellence in addition to these. The narrator asked: What is it? He replied: Allah will create from his progeny one who will be the helper and refuge of this Ummah; who would be the standard of its guidance and effulgence personified. Through him, Almighty Allah would protect lives, solve disputes and remove disunity; He would provide garments to the unclothed and feed the hungry. The fearful would get reassurance; the rain of mercy will descend. He would be the best of the sons and the most excellent elder; his statement would be the deciding statement and his silence (would be the silence of wisdom.(۲)

 Dawood Ibn Kathir narrates, he said to Imam al-Sadiq (as): O' son of the messenger, before you all have passed away, and if something happens to you, to whom should we

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۱- Nuqoosh Ismat, p. ۶۱۱ quotes from Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. ۱۱, p. ۲۳۴; Kamaluddin Tamamun Nima, p. ۲۰۳, Kitabul Irshad, p. ۳۰۸

۲- Nuqoosh Ismat, pp. ۶۱۱, ۶۱۲ quoted from Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. ۱۱, p. ۲۳۴; Uyun al-Akhbar al-Ridha, vol. ۱, p. ۲۳

(refer? He (as) replied, 'My son Musa'. (1)

▯ Faidh Ibn Mukhtar Narrates: He came to Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) and began to talk about Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as), who meanwhile returned from home and Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) said: Faidh, he is the one about whom you were asking me. Get up and accept his rightfulness for Imamate. Faidh kissed the hand and forehead of the Imam and then asked: Moula, can this information be given to others? He replied: Indeed, inform your family members and friends; but this information should not become public as times are very dangerous and the contemporary regime is always in (pursuit of divine proof.(2)

▯ Isa Alawi narrates: He went to meet Imam al-Sadiq (as) and said: If, God forbid something happens to you who would be the Imam after you? Imam (as) replied: My (son, Musa...(3)

▯ Maad Ibn Kathir narrates: He came to Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) and said: I pray to the Almighty that like He has given you this position in place of your father, He should create such a worthy person in your progeny as well. Imam (as) replied: Allah has already created him and saying this he gestured to his son, Musa, who was asleep at (that moment.(4)

▯ Mansur Ibne Hazim narrates: He came to the Imam and said: No one can be said to live forever; in case something happens to you, who would be the Imam after you? Imam (as) replied: This son of mine, Musa. (He was aged only 5 years

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1 - - Nuqoosh Ismat, p. 612 quoted from Behaar al-Anwaar vol. 11, p. 233; Uyun al-Akhbar al-Ridha, vol. 1, p. 156

2 - Nuqoosh Ismat, p. 612 quoted from Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 11, p. 234; Usul Kafi; Basairud Darajaat, Vol. 7, Chap. 11; p. 96; Kitabul Irshad, p. 307

3- Nuqoosh Ismat, p. 613 quoted from Usul Kafi, vol. 1, p. 309; Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 11, p. 235; Elamul Wara, p. 288

4- Nuqoosh Ismat, p. 614 quoted from Usul Kafi, vol. 1, p. 308; al-Irshad, p. 308; Behaar

(at that time).(1)

□ Sulaiman Ibne Khalid narrates: He was seated in the gathering with Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) along with others when Imam Musa (as) arrived. Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) said: He would be your Imam and Wali after me.(2)

□ Ishaq Ibne Jafar narrates: He says: I was there with my father when Imran Ibne Ali asked Imam al-Sadiq (as): Who would be the Imam after you? He said: The first to enter this room. Just then Imam Musa (as) entered the gathering and he was only a few years old.(3)

□ Ali Ibn Jafar narrates: He says: My father (Imam al-Sadiq) said to a group of his companions: Behave nicely with my son, Musa as he is the best in the world and after me, he would be my successor.(4)

□ Zurarah Ibne Ayyin narrates: He says: I was present with Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) and Imam Musa Ibne Jafar (as) was also present. Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) said: Call Humran, Abu Basir and Dawood Raqqi from my companions. I brought all of them and by chance Mufaddal Ibne Umar and other companions also arrived. Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) removed the sheet from the face of Ismail and asked: Dawood, is he dead or alive? He said: He has passed away. The Imam made everyone witness this and after that began the funeral rites. After that, Imam (as) again showed his face to all those who were present; that he is Ismail who has already passed away. After that, he ordered him to be buried;

1- Nuqoosh Ismat, p. ۶۱۴ quoted from Usul Kafi, vol. ۱, p. ۳۰۹; al-Irshad, p. ۳۰۸; Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. ۱۱, p. ۲۳۶

2- Ibid.

3- Nuqoosh Ismat, p. ۶۱۴ quoted from Kitab al-Irshad, p. ۲۶۵; Kashful Ghumma, p. ۲۴۴

4- Nuqoosh Ismat, p. ۲۱۵ quoted from Kitab al-Irshad, p. ۳۱۰; Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. ۱۱, p. ۲۳۶

when the body was lowered into the grave, the Imam displayed his face to everyone again and asked: Who is the one that is being buried? All said: It is Ismail. Imam (as) held the hand of his son, Musa and said: This is the rightful Imam and truth is with him and would continue in his generations.(١)

 [Musa al-Sayqal reported on the authority of al-Mufaddal b. Umar al-Jufi, may God have mercy on him, who said:] I (i.e. al-Mufaddal b. Umar al-Jufi) was with Abu Abd Allah (Imam Sadiq), peace be on him. Abu Ibrahim (Imam al-Kadhim), peace be on him, came in. He was still a boy. Abu Abd Allah, peace be on him, said to him: "Indicate to those of your Companions whom you trust that the position of authority belongs to him, Musa."(٢)

 [Abu Ali al-Arrajani reported on the authority of Abd al-Rahman b. al Hajjaj, who said:] I (i.e. Abd al-Rahman b. al-Hajjaj) visited Jafar b. Muhammad, peace be on them, in his house. He was in such-and-such a room in his house which he used as a prayer-room. He was praying there. On his right hand was Musa b. Jafar, peace be on them, following his prayer."May God make me your ransom," I said, "you know how I have dedicated my life to you and (you know of) my service to you. Who is the master of the affair (wali al-amr) after you?" He said: "Abd al-Rahman, Musa has put on the armor

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١- Nuqoosh Ismat, p. ٢١٥ quoted from Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. ١١, p. ٢٣٨

٢- Kitab Al Irshad, p. ٤٣٧ quoted from Al Kafi vol. ١, p. ٣٠٨

(and it fitted him." "After that, I have no further need of anything," I replied.(1)

 [Ibn Miskan reported on the authority of Sulayman b. Khalid, who said:] One day Abu Abd Allah Jafar, peace be on him, called for Abu al-Hasan Musa (Imam al-Kadhim) while we were with him. He told us: "It is your duty (to follow) this man after me. By God, he is your leader after me."(2)

 [Muhammad b. al-Walid reported: I heard Ali b. Jafar b. Muhammad al-Sadiq, peace be on them, say:] I (i.e. 'Ali b. Jafar) heard my father, Jafar b. Muhammad, peace be on them, say to a group of his close associates and followers: "Treat my son, Musa, peace be on him, with kindness. He is the most meritorious (afdal) of my children and the one who will succeed after me. He is the one who will undertake (qa'im) my position. He is God's proof (hujja) to all His creatures after me." Ali b. Jafar remained firmly loyal to his brother Musa, peace be on him, devoted to him, and enthusiastic in taking the outlines of religion from him. He has a famous (book) Masa'il (questions) in which he relates the answers he heard from (Musa ibn Jafar, peace be upon him).(3)

Points to ponder about

 There are so many authentic narrators who confirm the fact that Imam al-Sadiq (as) did announce Imam al-Kadhim (as) as his successor.

 How come there are no such narrations regarding Ismail or Muhammad ibn Ismail?

(What has been said about Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as)

point

 He was the successor and inheritor

p: ۵۸

۱- Kitab Al Irshad, p. ۴۳۷ quoted from Al Kafi, vol. ۱, p. ۳۰۸

۲- Kitab Al Irshad, p. ۴۳۹ quoted from Al Kafi, vol. ۱, p. ۳۱۰

۳- Kitab Al Irshad, pp. ۴۳۹ ۴۴۰

of Imam Jafar (as) in knowledge and divine cognition and was the greatest worshipper and charitable personality of the world.(1)

 He was the owner of extreme dignity and majesty and was a respectable personality. He possessed every kind of excellence and was a renowned personality of his time. He spent his nights in prayers and fasts and gave charity during the days.(2)

 He was a very respected and honorable Imam and a majestic divine proof. He spent the nights awake in prayers and fasted during days.(3)

 He was the greatest scholar, worshipper and the most charitable person of his time and he possessed a lofty soul.(4)

 He was the most sincere worshipper and pious man of his time. His excellences and perfections are innumerable.(5)

 He was the greatest personality of the world from the aspect of knowledge and cognition and became the guardian of the Ummah according to the nomination of his father.(6)

Points to ponder about

 Not only Shias but also scholars of Ahle Sunna had praises for Imam al-Kadhim (as).

 Are there any such comments found regarding the Ismaili Imams?

Worship of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as)

point

 Like the rest of the infallibles, Imam Musa al-Kadhim also was known for his worship. The total time Imam (as) spent in the prison was about 14 years. He used to thank Allah (swt) for giving him the opportunity to worship in peace in the prison. The regime of that time was bewildered by this attitude of the Imam (as), that even in such hard times he was thankful to Allah (swt), and was engrossed in worship. Such

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۱- Nuqoosh Ismat, p. ۶۱۶ quoted from Ibne Hajar Makki, p. ۱۲۱

۲- Nuqoosh Ismat, p. ۶۱۶ quoted from Ibne Talha Shafei, Matalibus So-ool, p. ۳۰۸

۳- Nuqoosh Ismat, p. ۶۱۶ quoted from Allamah Shibli, Anwarul Akhbar, p. ۱۳۵

۴- Nuqoosh Ismat, p. ۶۱۶ quoted from Fusulul Muhaimma, Arjahul Matalib, p. ۴۵۱; Ibne Sabbagh Maliki

۵- Nuqoosh Ismat, p. ۶۱۶ quoted from Husayn Waiz Kashifi, Rauzatus Shohada, p. ۴۳۲

۶- Nuqoosh Ismat, p. ۶۱۶ quoted from Rauzatul Ahbab

the state of his worship that after morning prayers, he used to place his head in prostration and he would raise his head only when it was time for noon prayers. So much so that he was called as 'one who performed long prostrations'.(١)

 Harun al-Rashid tried different tactics to get rid of Imam Musa al-Kadhim, but they failed, so he sent a beautiful lady into the cell of the Holy Imam (as) to frame him for unlawful sex. But when the prison wardens surveyed the prison, they found the woman in prostration. She was asked that she had a task to perform, what happened? And she explained, 'when I came here I saw that the Imam was busy in supplicating to the Almighty and the voices of Labbaik (here I am) were coming from the other side; so I realized that there could be no better opportunity of worship; thus now I get pleasure only in prostration.(٢)

 Harun al-Rashid ordered that Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) be imprisoned in Basra, the governor of Basra at that time was Isa' ibn Jafar ibn al-Mansur then after a year Harun al-Rashid wrote to Isa' ibn Jafar to kill the Imam (as). Isa ibn Jafar wrote to Harun: 'The affair of Musa ibn Jafar and his stay under my detention has been going on for a long time. I have become well acquainted with his situation. I have set spies on him throughout this period and I have found him doing nothing but worship. I

١- Nuqoosh Ismat, p. ۶۲۱ quoted from Wasilatun Najaat, p. ۳۱۰, quoted from Faslul Khitab; Yanabiul Mawaddah, Chap. ۶۵, p. ۳۲۱; Shawahidun Nubuwwah, p. ۱۹۴; Nurul Absar, p. ۱۳۵; Elamul Wara, p. ۱۷۸; Sawaneh Musa Kadhim, p. ۸

٢- Nuqoosh Ismat, pp. ۶۰۴-۶۰۵ quoted from Manaqib, Ibne Shahr Ashob

set someone to listen to what he said in his supplications. He has never prayed against you or me. He has never mentioned us with malice. He does not pray for himself except for forgiveness and mercy. Either you send someone whom I can hand him over to or I will set him free. I am troubled at detaining him.' It is reported that one of the spies of Isa' ibn Jafar reported to him that frequently he used to hear him (Imam Musa) say in his prayers while he was detained: O' God, You know that I used to ask You to give me free time to worship You. O' God you have done that. To You be praise.' After receiving the message from Isa' ibn Jafar, Harun al- Rashid directed that Imam al-Kadhim (as) should be sent to Baghdad, there he (as) was handed over to al-Fadl ibn al-Rabi'. (1)

Points to ponder about

- The amount of worship the Holy Imam did, even while in prison!
- Why were the rulers after the Imams? What were they afraid of?
- Altogether 14 years of Imam al-Kadhim's life was spent in prison.
- Are any of the Ismaili Imams known for such worship?

Earning the daily bread

point

The Imams of Ahlul Bayt (as) used to work for a living. For example, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as), worked on one of his farms. Abu 'Umar al-Shaybani has related, saying: "I saw Abi 'Abd Allah (Jafar al-Sadiq), peace be on him, carrying a spade in his hand, wearing thick loin cloth and oozing sweat. Thus, I

1- Al Mufid, Shaykh Kitab Al Irshad, p. 454

said to him: 'May I be your ransom, let me help you!' He, peace be on him, said: 'I like to see man toiling in the heat of the sun for seeking his livelihood."(1)

Imam al-Kadhim (as) worked for earning a living too. Al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Hamza has narrates, saying: "I saw Abi al-Hasan Musa (Imam al-Kadhim, peace be upon him) working on a land of his. His feet were soaked with sweat, so I asked him: 'May I be your ransom, where are the men?' Imam al-Kadhim (as) replied: 'Ali, the one who is better than I and my father worked with his hand? Al-Hasan was dazzled and asked him: Who is he? He (as) replied: Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, the Commander of the faithful (Imam Ali), and all my forefathers worked with their hands; work is of the behaviors of the prophets, the apostles, and the righteous.(2)

Points to ponder about

 The true Imams used to work hard to make their living. They used to even take pride in doing so. Are there any such anecdotes regarding the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams?

Some interesting anecdotes from his life

Anecdote ۱

point

All of the infallible Imams (as) displayed excellent manners and had impeccable character. Allama Hilli narrates in his book 'Minhajul Karama' that when Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) was in Baghdad, he passed by a decorated house and the sound of singing and music was heard from within. Just then, a maid came out to throw garbage. Imam al-Kadhim (as) asked the maid: Who is the owner of

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۱- Al-'Amal wa Huqooq al-'Amil fi al-Islam, p. ۱۳۵

۲- Man La Yahdarahu al-Faqeeh, vol. ۳, p. ۵۳.

his house, a slave or a free man? She said: A free man. Imam (as) said: Indeed, if it had been a slave, he would have obeyed his master. Saying this, the Imam moved on. When the slave girl returned inside the house, Bushr the master of the house asked why she took such a long time and she narrated the incident. Bushr was so much affected by these words that he ran out of the house barefooted to meet the Imam, and when he caught up to the Imam, he asked for divine forgiveness for his actions and in memory of this incident he walked barefoot all his life.(١) Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) changed this man with a short statement; these words of the Imam were so effective that this man totally changed. Bushr Hafi repented after this incident and .started practicing piety and became a great saint

Points to ponder about

 The goal of the truly divinely appointed Imams was guidance. They were not after .the worldly pleasures

 The truly divinely appointed Imams used different approaches to guide the people. .Imam (as) used such a nice approach to guide Bushr Hafi

? Are there any such anecdotes regarding the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams

Anecdote ٢

point

Once Harun al-Rashid was visiting the Holy city of Medina and he came to the grave of the Holy Prophet (sawa) and he said, 'peace be upon you O' son of my uncle'. The people around Harun were very impressed that Harun was related to the Holy Prophet (sawa). Just then Imam al-Kadhim came to

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Nuqqosh Ismat, p. ۶١٩ quoted from Al Kuna wal Alqaab, vol. ٢, p. ١۶٨ -١

visit the grave of the Holy Prophet (sawa) and he said, ‘peace be on you O’ my father’. Hearing this Harun was annoyed and said, ‘how can you be the son of the Prophet, you are the son of Ali and of Fatima and she was the daughter of the Prophet (sawa)? Imam al-Kadhim (as) recited the ayahs of Suratul An’am ۸۳-۸۵:

وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ ۚ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَّنْ نَّشَاءُ ۗ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ۸۳

That was Our argument which We gave to Abraham (to use) against his people: We raise whom We will, degree after degree: for thy Lord is full of wisdom and knowledge.(1)

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ اِسْحَٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ ۚ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا ۚ وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۖ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَٰنَ وَاَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَهَٰرُونَ ۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِى الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۸۴

We gave him Isaac and Jacob: all (three) We guided: and before him, We guided Noah, and among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron: thus do We reward those who do good.(2)

وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَاِلْيَاسَ ۖ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّٰلِحِينَ ۸۵

And Zakariya and John, and Jesus and Elias: all in the ranks of the Righteous:(3)

After reciting the ayahs, Imam Kadhim (as) asked Harun, “Who is the father of Jesus (as)?” Imam continued, “Jesus is considered among the Prophet’s offspring through his mother Maryam; likewise, we are the offspring of the Holy Prophet (sawa) through our mother, Fatima (sa)…” [Here as per these ayahs Jesus (as) is the son of Noah (as), but Jesus (as) was the son of Mary (sa) and he was

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1- Surah An’am (۶), Ayah ۸۳

2- Surah An’am (۶), Ayah ۸۴

3- Surah An’am (۶), Ayah ۸۵

miraculously born without a father and as per Quran, Jesus (as) is from the progeny of Noah (as).]

Then Imam al-Kadhim (as) quoted the ayah ٦١ of Suratul Aal e Imran:

فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ ٦١

Should anyone argue with you concerning him, after the knowledge that has come to you, say, "Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our souls and your souls, then let us pray earnestly and call down Allah's curse upon the liars."(١)

Here the Holy Prophet (sawa) took Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn (as) as his sons) when he confronted the Christians)

After quoting the ayahs to Harun, Imam al-Kadhim (as) asked him, "If the Prophet (sawa) would come back and ask you O' Harun, for your daughter, then would you give your daughter's hand in marriage to the Prophet (sawa)?" Harun replied, "Glory be to Allah! Why wouldn't I fulfill his wish? Indeed I would be honored among the Arabs, non-Arabs, and Quraish to do so." The Imam then said: "But he would not ask to marry my daughter, nor could I give her to him in marriage." Harun exclaimed: "Why not?" The Imam said: "For he has begotten me and has not begotten you, my daughter will be Mahram to him (sawa) as she is from his progeny."(٢)

Points to ponder about

- The truly divinely appointed Imams in a lot of cases used to answer

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١- Surah Aal-e-Imran (٣), Ayah ٦١

٢- Uyun al-Akhbar al-Ridha: vol. ١, p. ٨١; Ehtejaj al-Tabarsi: vol. ٢, p. ٣٨٩; Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. ٤٨, p. ١٢٥

the questions using the verses of Quran. Are any such answers found in the lives of ?the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams

 The divinely appointed Imams were not afraid of telling the truth even in front of the .oppressor caliph

 The answers of the divinely appointed Imams were logical. Can one find any such ?logical answers given by the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams

(Sayings of Imam Musa al–Kadhim (as

point

(Kindness and love to people is half of wisdom.(۱

(Whoever wants to be the strongest among the people should depend upon Allah.(۲

 He is not of us (the one) who does not reckon himself every day, so if he did a good deed he asks Allah for increasing it, and if he did a bad deed, he asks Allah's (forgiveness and repents to Him.(۳

(Anger is the key to every evil.(۴

 Whoever made supplication before (thanking and) praising Allah and before sending blessing upon the Prophet (sawa) is as the one who throws an arrow without a (bowstring.(۵

(Whoever made his parents sad has been ungrateful to them.(۶

 Whenever people commit new sins which they didn't use to do, Allah gives them (new afflictions which they didn't expect.(۷

(Your aid to the weak is of the best of charities.(۸

 Reliance on Allah has grades. One of them is that you rely on Him in every matter and be pleased with whatever He decides for you and know that He never hesitates in providing you any good and grace and that every decision is from Him so leave every

(affair to His Will and rely and put trust only in Him.(۹

 Every person

Tohaf al-Uqool, p. ۴۲۵ -۱

Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. ۷۱, p. ۱۴۳ -۲

Usool al-Kafi, vol. ۴, p. ۱۹۱ -۳

Tohaf al-Uqool, p. ۴۱۶ -۴

Tohaf al-Uqool, p. ۴۲۵ -۵

Tohaf al-Uqool, p. ۴۲۵ -۶

Tohaf al-Uqool , p. ۴۳۴ -۷

Tohaf al-Uqool , p. ۴۳۷ -۸

Al Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۶۵ -۹

who strives to obtain Halal (permissible) sustenance or provision is like a fighter in the (path of God.(1)

 If there is a walnut in your hand and people say that it is a pearl, their saying will not benefit you in any way when you know that it is actually a walnut. And if there is a pearl in your hand and people say that it is a walnut, their saying will not harm you in (any way when you know that it is actually a pearl.(2)

 Indeed cultivation and growth takes shape in a soft, even land and not in a rocky (barren) land. Likewise, wisdom grows and develops in a humble heart and not in a (proud, vain and arrogant heart.(3)

Points to ponder about

 The sayings of the divinely appointed Imams are full of wisdom. Do the ?Ismaili/Fatimid Imams have such sayings at all

Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha (as) Martyred ۸۱۸ AD

point

Imam al-Ridha (as) (4) was the son of the seventh Holy Imam al-Kadhim (as). He was .born in ۱۴۸ Hijri. He is believed by Ithna Asharis to be the eighth Holy Imam

His nicknames

Al-Ridha: He is popularly known as al-Ridha because he was the pleasure of Allah (swt). Al-Bizanti asked Imam al-Jawad (as), 'weren't your forefathers (as) the pleasure of Allah (swt) and of His Messenger (sawa) too?' "Yes," replied Imam al-Jawad. "Then why has only your father been named al-Ridha?" al-Bizanti asked. "Because both his opposing enemies and obedient supporters were pleased with him, (while this did not happen to any of his fathers, so only he was called al-Ridha." (5)

Some

Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. ۱۰۳, p. ۴ -۱

Tohaf al-Uqool, p. ۳۸۳ -۲

Tohaf al-Uqool, p. ۳۹۵ -۳

.Reza' as per the Persian and Urdu pronounciation' -۴

Al-Qarashi, Baqir Sharif, Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۶۴ -۵

of his (as) other nicknames are: Al-Sabir (the patient), al-Zaki (pure, noble), al-Wafi (Loyal), Siraj Allah (the lamp of Allah), Qurat 'Ayn al- Mumineen (delight of the eye of the believers), al-Siddiq (the very truthful one), and al-Fadhil (the most meritorious (one of all the people of his time).(١)

One of the famous kunya of Imam al-Ridha (as) is Abu al-Hasan; His father Imam Musa al-Kadhim, peace be on him, gave him this kunya. He, peace be on him, said to 'Ali b. Yaqtin: "O 'Ali, this son of mine-and he pointed to Imam al-Ridha is the master of my children, and I have given him my kunya. " Imam al-Ridha was given the kunya of Abu al-Hasan. As this kunya was common between them, Imam al-Kadhim was called: Abu al-Hasan the first, and Imam al-Ridha was called Abu al-Hasan the (second, so that the people might distinguish between the two kunyas.(٢)

(What has been said about Imam al-Ridha (as

Ibrahïm Bin al-'Abbas al-Sawli

Ibrahïm b. al-'Abbas al-Sawli), a creative writer and famous poet, has said: "I have) never seen nor have I heard that anyone is more meritorious than Abul Hasan al-.Ridha. Do not believe him who claims that he has seen the like of him in his excellence

The Imam was the model of outstanding merits and talents. There was none like him (in his time, for he was among the pillars of thought and virtue in the world of Islam.(٣)

Abu al-Salt al-Harawi

Abu al-Salt, 'Abd al-Salam al-Harawi, who was among the great figures of his time, has said: "I have never seen anyone

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Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, pp. ٦٤-٦٦ -١

Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ٦٧ quoted from al-Majlisi, Behaar al-Anwaar, -٢ vol. ١٢, pp. ٣, ٤

Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ١٠٦ -٣

more learned than ‘Ali b. Musa al-Ridha. When a (religious) scholar sees him, he bears witness for him just as I do. Al-Ma’mun gathered for him a number of the scholars of religions, the jurists of Islamic law, and the theologians. However, he (al-Ridha) .overcame them, to the extent that they acknowledged his excellence over them

These words give an account of the great scientific abilities of the Imam, peace be on him, for he was the most knowledgeable and meritorious of the people of his time. This can clearly be seen in the debates which al-Ma’mun held in his palace in order to test the Imam. Al-Ma’mun had gathered the scholars of the countries and cities, and they tested the Imam with the most difficult questions; yet he (as) answered them skilfully. So the scholars admired him, confessed their feebleness before him, and (acknowledged his excellence over them.(١

Al-Raja’ Bin Abu al-Dhhak

Al-Raja’ Bin Abu al-Dhhak, a military commander, has said: “By Allah, I have never seen anyone more devout to Allah than him, praised Allah throughout his times more .than he did, and feared Allah, the Great and Almighty, more than he did

These words show the spiritual side in the Imam’s character, for he was the most (religious of all the people; he praised Allah and feared Him more than they did.(٢

Al-Shaykh al-Mufid

Shaykh al-Mufid, said: “The Imam who undertook (the office) (qa’im) after Abu al-Hasan Musa b. Ja’far, peace be on them, was his son Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali b. Musa al-Ridha, peace be on them,

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Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۰۶ -۱

Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۰۶ -۲

because of his merit over all his brothers and the members of his House (ahl baytihi), because of the knowledge, forbearance and pity which he showed, and which the Shïa (khasa) and the non-Shïa ('amma) agreed on with regard to him and recognized him for. (١)

Al-Shaykh al-Mufïd has mentioned some qualities which distinguished Imam al-Ridha, peace be on him, from the rest of his brothers and the members of his House. These noble qualities and peculiarities are as follows:

١. Knowledge.

٢. Forbearance.

٣. Piety

Al-Waqidi

Al-Waqidi has said: Ali (al-Ridha) heard the hadith from his father, his uncles, and others. He was trustworthy and gave religious precepts in the Mosque of Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, at the age of more than twenty. He belonged to the eighth class of the next generation from among the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt). (٢)

Al-Waqidi has mentioned two of the Imam's qualities which are as follows:

١. Trustworthiness.

٢. His giving religious decisions at the age of over twenty.

Jamal al-Din

Jamal al-Din Ahmed b. 'Ali, a genealogist, popularly known as ibn 'Anba, has said: "Imam al-Ridha was given the kunya of Abu al-Hasan. None of the Ta`libiyyïn of his time was like him. Al-Ma'mun pledged allegiance to him, minted dirhams and dinars in his name, and ordered his name to be mentioned on the pulpits."(٣)

Al-Sayyid Jamal al-Din has mentioned that none was like the Imam in his time; he was

.unique in his time due to his talents and geniuses

Yousif b. Taghri Bardi

Jamal al-Din Abu al-Mahasin Yousif b. Taghri has said: “Imam

p: ۷۰

Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۰۷, quoted from al-Irshad, p. ۳۴ -۱

Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۰۷ quoted from Tazkeratul Khawaas, p. ۳۶۱ -۲

Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۰۸ quoted from Umdatu al-Talib fi Ansab Al- -۳ Abu Talib, p. ۱۹۸

Abu al-Hasan al-Hashimi, al-'Alawi, al-Husayni was a learned Imam. He was the chief of the Hashimites of his time and was the greatest of them. Al-Ma'mun magnified him, honored him, yielded to him and extremely mentioned him, to the extent that he (made him his successor."(١)

These words shed light on some qualities of the personality of the Imam (as), which are: He was learned. He was the chief of the Ha`shimites and was the greatest of .them. As he had a great character, al-Ma'mun appointed him as his successor

Ibn Maja

Ibn Maja has said: He (Imam al-Ridha) was the chief of the Hashimites. Al-Ma'mun magnified and honoured him. He designated him as his successor and took the Pledge (of allegiance to him (from the people).(٢)

Ibn Maja took care of one of the Imam's qualities, which is that he was the chief of the Hashimites. Of course, the Imam was the master of the people of his time, for the Hashimites were the master of the people because of their good manners, their exalted ethics, and their excellent behaviour.Ibn Maja took care of one of the Imam's qualities, which is that he was the chief of the Hashimites. Of course, the Imam was the master of the people of his time, for the Hashimites were the master of the people .because of their good manners, their exalted ethics, and their excellent behaviour

Ibn Hajar

Ibn Hajar has said: Al-Ridha was among the men of knowledge and merits; he had noble lineage.(٣)Even the known scholars

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١- Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ٢٠٨ quoted from Al-Nujum al-Zahirah, vol. ٢, p. ٧۴

٢- Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ١٠٨ quoted from Khulasat Tahzeeb al Kamal, p ٢٧٨

٣- Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ١٠٩ quoted from Tahzeeb al-Tahzeeb, vol. ٧,

(of Ahle Sunna had great things to say about Imam al-Ridha (as

Al-Yafi'i

Al-Ya`fi'i has said: "The great, magnified Imam, the descendant of the noble Sayyids, 'Ali b. Musa al-Ridha`, was one of the twelve Imams, the possessors of the laudable (deeds; the Imami Shïa have followed them and adopted their doctrine." (١)

Amir al-Ta'i'

Amir al-Ta'i has commented on the book entitled Sahïfat Ahl al-Bayt, peace be on' them, which is one of Imam al-Ridha's works, saying: "Ali b. Musa al-Ridha, the Imam of the Allah-fearing and model of the grandsons of the Master of messengers related (to us... "(٢)

.Imam al-Ridha was the chief of the Allah-fearing and Imam of worshippers

Hashim Ma'ruf

Allama, late al-Sayyid Hashim Ma'ruf al-Husayni has said: "Imam al-Ridha, peace be' on him, was distinguished by wonderful noble moral traits which helped him attract both Shïa (khaassah) and non-Shïa (aammah). He took these ethics from the essence of the Message with which he was entrusted, and which he safeguarded and (inherited.(٣

This statement reports one of the qualities of the Imam, peace be on him, which is his exalted morals. It is worth mentioning that his morals were similar to those of his grandfather, the greatest Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, who was the .master of all prophets

Al-Dhahabi

Al-Dhahabi has said: "He (al-Ridha) is Imam Abu al-Hasan b. Musa al-Kadhim b. Jafar al-Sadiq b. Mohammed al-Baqir b. 'Ali Zayn al-'AbiDin b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Abu Talib al-Hashimi al-'Alawi. He was the master of the Hashimites of his time; he

۱- Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۰۹ quoted from Mir'at al-Jinan, vol. ۲, p. ۱۱

۲- The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۰۹

۳- The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۱۰ quoted from Sirat al Aimma al Ithna 'Ashar, vol. ۲, p ۳۵۹

was the most clement and noblest of them. Al-Ma'mun honoured him, yielded to him, and magnified him to the extent that he appointed him as his successor." (١)

Al-Dhahabi, known for showing enmity toward the ahl al-Bayt (peace be on them), has acknowledged the outstanding merits of Imam al-Ridha, peace be on him.(٢)

Mahmud Bin Wihayb

Mahmud Bin Wihayb al-Baghdadi has said: "He (al-Ridha), may Allah be pleased with him, had numerous miracles, so he was the unique of his time."(٣)

Imam al-Ridha was the unique of his time because of his abundant knowledge, his reverential fear, his piety, his clemency, and his munificence. None was like him in excellence and talents.

'Arif Thamir

'Arif Thamir has said: "He (Imam al-Ridha) is regarded as one of the Imams who played a great role on the arena of the Islamic events in his time."(۴)

During the short period of his undertaking the office of regency, Imam al-Ridha could manifest the origin values of Islamic policy, for he ordered al-Ma'mun to establish justice and fairness among the people, prevented him from wasting the properties of the state and from other matters.

Mohammed Bin Shakir al-Kutubi

Mohammed Bin Shakir al-Kutubi has said: "He (Imam al-Ridha, peace be on him) is one of the twelve Imams. He was the master of the Ha`shimites of his time." (۵)

Yousif al-Nabahani

Yousif al-Nabahani has said: "'Ali b. Musa al-Kadhim b. Jafar al-Sadiq, peace be on them, was one of the great Imams, the lamps of the community from among the Household of the Prophet, the origin of knowledge, and generosity. He had

1- The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۱۱ quoted from Tarikh al Islam p ۳۴

2- The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۱۱

3- The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۱۱ quoted from Jawahir al-Kalam, p. ۱۴۳

4- The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۱۱ quoted from Uyyun al Tawarikh, vol. ۳, p. ۲۲۶

5- The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۱۱

a great position and famous reputation. He had many miracles of which are that he foretold that he would die of eating (poisoned) grapes and pomegranates. The matter (happened just as he had predicted."(١

The Imam, peace be on him, was a brilliant branch of the Prophetic family through .whom Allah exalted the Arabs and the Muslims, in addition to his clear lineage

Points to ponder about

 Not only the Shias, rather even some famous Sunni scholars had nothing but praises for Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha (as). The scholars of Ahle Sunna, like Ibn Maja, Ibn Hajar and even Dhahabi had praises for Imam al-Ridha (as). This shows that the divinely appointed Imams were impeccable in character this is why even the .opposition had nothing but praises

? Do we find any such praises regarding the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams

His Nomination

His Textual Nomination for the Imamate of al-Ridha

Imam Musa, peace be on him, appointed his son Imam al-Ridha, peace be on him, as an Imam and high authority after him, that he might lead his Shi'ites and the community. Many ordinances were brought out of the prison. In them it was written: ("My testament ('ahd) is to my eldest son."(٢

Imam Musa took great care of appointing his son as an Imam after him. He entrusted :this affair to a large group of his eminent Shi'ites, of whom are the following

Ali Bin Yaqtin'

Ali Bin Yaqtin has reported: "I (i.e. 'Ali Bin Yaqtin) was with Abu al-Hasan Musa b. ' Jafar, peace be on him, and was with him his son 'Ali. He said: 'O 'Ali, this son of mine is

1- The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ١١٢

2- The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ١٣۶ quoted from Hayat al-Imam Musa Bin Ja'far, vol. ٢, pp. ۴۶٩-۴٧١

the master of my children and I have given him my kunya (i.e. both were called Abu al-Hasan).' Hisham b. Salim was in the assembly. He struck his face with the palm of his hand and said: 'We belong to Allah, by Allah; he (Imam al-Kadhim) has announced his death for you."(۱)

Na'eem Bin Qabus

Na'eem Bin Qa`bu`s has reported, saying: [Abu al-Hasan (Musa), peace be on him, said:] "My son 'Ali is the eldest of my children, the most attentive of them to my words, and the most obedient of them to my order..."(۲)

Dawud Bin Kuthayr

Dawud b. Kuthayr al-Raqqi has narrated, saying: [I (i.e. Dawud b. Kuthayr) said to Musa al-Kadhim:] "May I be your ransom, I have grown old. So take my hand and save me from hell-fire. Who is our leader (sahib) after you?"

"This is your leader after me," he said and pointed to his son Abu al-Hasan al-Ridha.(۳)

Sulayman Bin Hafs

Sulayman b. Hafs al-Marwazi has reported: [I (i.e. Sulayman b. Hafs) visited Abu al-Hasan Musa b. Jafar. I wanted to ask him about the proof over the people after him. When he looked at me, he began saying:] "O Sulayman, my son 'Ali is my testamentary trustee. He is the proof over the people after me. He is the most meritorious of my children. If it happens that you remain alive after me, bear witness to him about this matter before my Shi'ites and the people of my authority who ask you about my successor after me.(۴)

'Abd Allah al-Hashimi

'Abd Allah al-Hashimi has said: [We were

۱- The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۳۷ quoted from Kashf al Ghumma Vol. ۳, p. ۸۸

۲- The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۳۷ quoted from Kashf al Ghumma Vol. ۳, p. ۸۸

۳- The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۳۸ quoted from Al-Fusul al-Muhimma, p. ۲۲۵

۴- The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ۱۳۸ quoted from 'Uyun al-Akhbar al-Ridha, vol. ۱, p. ۲۶

beside the grave (i.e. the grave of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family). Suddenly, Abu Ibrahim Musa b. Ja'far came toward us hand in hand with his son 'Ali. Then he said:] "Do you know who I am?" "You are our master and our eldest one," we said. "Name and ascribe me," he demanded. "You are Musa b. Ja'far," we said. "Who is this?" he asked and pointed to his son. "He is 'Ali b. Musa b. Ja'far," we replied. "Witness that he is my agent in this world during my lifetime and my testamentary (trustee after my death.(١)

Points to ponder about

 There are many more references that talk about the nomination of Imam al-Ridha. The narrators are authentic. Are there any authentic traditions regarding the ?nomination of Ismail ibn Jafar or Muhammad ibn Ismail

 On the contrary when we look into the Fatimid history we see that their Imam appointed someone but they follow someone else: Al-Hakim had already appointed Abd al-Rahman as his successor and it is recorded in history, even though Abd al-Rahman was not his son! But after the death of al-Hakim, al- Zahir was placed on the throne! If al-Hakim, the Fatimid Imam, wanted Abd al-Rahman to succeed him, then why was al-Zahir placed on the throne and called an Imam? The Ismailis follow al-Zahir as an Imam, even though al-Hakim, their own Imam, appointed Abd al-Rahman ?as his successor

His Debates

point

The time of the Imam, peace be on him, is famous for the debates and arguments which

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The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ١٣٨ quoted from 'Uyun al-Akhbar al- - ١ Ridha, vol. ١, pp. ٢۶-٢٧

spread among the great figures of religions, of Islamic schools, and of other .ideologies

Al-Ma'mun, the Abbasid Caliph appointed Imam al-Ridha, (as), as his heir apparent. However, he was not sincere in this purpose nor did he believe that the Imam was more appropriate than him for the caliphate. He (al-Ma'mun) ordered all his governors in Islamic world to summon the great (religious) scholars, who were experienced in different kinds of science, to go to Khurasan in order to question the Imam about the most difficult scientific matters. When they came to him (al-Ma'mun), he mentioned the matter before them and promised to enrich those who would question the Imam and render him incapable of answering them. Generally speaking, :he appointed him as his heir apparent for the following political reasons

Al-Ma'mun intended to destroy the beliefs of the Shi'ites and to efface their traces. .١ He wanted the religious scholars to render Imam al-Ridha, peace be on him, incapable of answering them, that he might use his incapability as means to cancel the beliefs of the Shi'ites, who maintained that the Imam should be the most learned of the people of his time and most knowledgeable of them in all kinds of science. Of course, if the Imam had been incapable of disproving the scholars' beliefs, he would have shaken the entity of the Shi'ites and abrogated their beliefs in the Imams of the .members of the House, Ahl al-Bayt, peace be on them

If the Imam had been unable to answer .٢

the questions of the religious scholars, al-Ma'mun would have been able to remove him from regency. In other words al-Ma'mun would have been able to achieve his political aims through the Imam, for he had told the people that he nominated him for .that important office because he was the most learned of the community

Meanwhile, his mass media would have announced that the Imam had fallen short of answering the scholars' questions so that it might respond to the Abbasid family's feelings. Anyhow, the leading scholars had prepared the most difficult questions and asked the Imam about them, and he skilfully answered them. The narrators have mentioned: "He (Imam al-Ridha) was asked about more than twenty thousand questions in different times to the extent that al-Ma'mun's palace became a scientific centre, that the leading scholars admired the Imam's talents and abilities, that they announced to the people the Imam's great abilities in knowledge and excellence, and (that most of them believed in his Imamate. (١

:The following are some extracts of some of the debates

Debate with Abu Qurra

.Where is Allah?" asked Abu Qurra"

Imam al-Ridha (as) answered, "The 'where' is a place. This is the question of one who is present about one who is absent. As for Allah, the Most High is not absent; nor was there an eternal thing before Him. He is everywhere. He is Director, Creator, Keeper, (the Holder of the heavens and the earth."(٢

Debate with the catholic

Among others, al-Ma'mun also invited Zoroastrian Priests, Rabbi's, Catholic Archbishop to debate with Imam al-Ridha. When

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The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, pp. ١٥٨-١٥٩ -١

The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, p. ١٩٥ -٢

they all arrived in the palace, al-Fadl b. Sahl went in a hurry to the Imam (as) and said to him: "May I be your ransom, your cousin (i.e. al-Ma'mun) is waiting for you. The ".?people have gathered. What is your view of going to him

The Imam answered him that he was ready to attend (the session) and that he was going to al-Ma'mun. The session was attended by the Ta'libiyyin, the Ha'shimites, the military commanders, Muslim and non-Muslim scholars. When the Imam came, al-Ma'mun and all those who were in the session stood up for him and welcomed him with honour. The Imam sat while the people were still standing in order to show respect for him. Al-Ma'mun ordered them to sit and they sat down. All the people in the session kept silent as a sign of respect for the Imam, and then al-Ma'mun turned to the Catholic Archbishop and said to him: "Catholic, this is my cousin Ali b. Musa b. Jafar. He is one of the children of Fatemah, daughter of our Prophet (sawa) and of Ali b. Abu Talib (as). I would like you to debate with him on theology, argue with him, and ".show justice toward him

Commander of the faithful, how can I argue with a man who argues with me through" a Book which we have denied and a Prophet whom I do not believe in?" asked the .Catholic

The Catholic thought that the Imam, peace be on him, would produce evidence in support

of his beliefs through some verses of the Holy Qur'an or through some words of the Messenger (sawa). As he had no faith in the Qur'anic verses and the Prophetic traditions, he asked the Imam to give proof of his beliefs from their own Books, and the Imam answered him saying: "Christian, if I give proof from your Gospel, will you "?admit it

Yes," retorted the Catholic, "By Allah, I will admit it. Can I repel what the Bible speaks" "?about

Imam al-Ridha (as) proved to the Catholic from the Bible that Prophet Muhammad and his family has been mentioned in the Bible. He also named the disciples of Nabi .(Isa (as

Later the Holy Imam al-Ridha (as) added, saying: "By Allah, we believe in 'Isa who believed in Muhammad (sawa). We have nothing against 'Isa except his weakness ".and the paucity of his fasting and prayer

When the Catholic heard the last words of the Imam's statement, he shouted: "By Allah, you have corrupted your knowledge! Your affair has become weak! I thought "!that you were the most learned of the Muslims

"?The Imam faced him calmly, asking: "Why

The Catholic lost his mind, so he began saying: "Because of your statement (which is) that 'Isa was weak with little fasting and praying, (while) 'Isa never broke fasting by ".day and never slept by night. He always fasted by day and prayed by night

The Imam got ready to disprove the Christian belief which said that Nabi Isa (as) was a god other than Allah

and was served! He asked the Catholic: “For whom did he (Nabi Isa) fast and pray?” (In other words Imam al-Ridha (as) asked the Catholic, ‘if you claim that Nabi Isa (’?worshipped, then who did he worship? If you claim that he was a god

The Catholic did not answer, not knowing what to say. So the Imam turned to him, ”.saying: “I want to ask you a question

”.Ask,” Said the Catholic, “I will answer you if I have knowledge of it“

Imam al-Ridha (as) asked, “Did you not deny that ‘Isa gave life to the dead with ”?Allah’s permission

I had denied that before,” the Catholic answered, “he who gives life to the dead,“ ”.heals the blind and the leprous is a lord worthy of being served

The Imam (as) disproved his statement, saying: “Indeed al-Yasa’ did just as ‘Isa, peace be on him, did: he walked on the water, gave life to the dead, and healed the blind and the leprous. Why did his community not adopt him as a lord? Why did not anyone serve him (as a god) other than Allah? He gave life to thirty-five men sixty years after their death. This (statement) is in the Torah. None denies it except an ”.unbeliever

The Catholic admired the Imam’s knowledge of their Books, and then he said: “We ”.have heard of it and recognized it

Imam al-Ridha (as) continued, “If you have adopted ‘Isa as a lord, then it is ,permissible for you to adopt al-Yasa’ and Hizqal as two lords

for they did just as ‘Isa b. Maryam did such as giving life to the dead. You cannot deny all these things which I have mentioned to you, for the Torah, the Bible, the Zabur .”(David’s Psalms) the Furqa`n (Qur’a`n) have mentioned them

The Imam criticized the Christians for their adopting Jesus (as) as a lord other than Allah, for he gave life to the dead, healed the blind and the leprous, while such miracles happened through the master of the prophets, the Messenger (sawa) and through some great prophets, but they were not adopted and served as lords other .than Allah, the Most High

After the Catholic Archbishop had heard these brilliant words of the Imam, he (addressed him, saying: “My view agrees with yours, and there is no god but Allah.”(١

Imam al-Ridha (as) continued and brought up a lot of points from the Bible. The Catholic admired the Imam and confessed to him that he had no knowledge of all that, saying: “This I did not know and now I have learned from you things with which I was familiar and to which my heart testifies to be the truth. I have, therefore, gained (a better understanding.”(٢

Debate with Rabbi

Before starting the debate the Rabbi put forward a condition that Imam al-Ridha should base his arguments on the Torah, Bible and Zabur only. The Imam agreed to this condition, saying: “Do not accept any proof from me except what the Torah says by the tongue of Musa`, the Bible by

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The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha p ١٩٩ -٢٠۴ -١

The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha p ٢٠۶ -٢

the tongue of 'Isa b. Maryam, and the Zabur by the tongue of Dawud, peace be on ".them

After proving that Prophet Muhammad is mentioned in the Torah and Zabur, Imam al-".` Ridha said to the Rabbi, "I want to question you about your prophet Musa

.Question," was the answer"

.What is the evidence for the Prophethood of Musa` ?" asked the Imam"

The Rabbi began producing evidence in support of the Prophethood of Musa, saying: ".“He brought what the prophets before him had not brought

.Could you give me an example of what he brought?" asked the Imam"

The Rabbi replied: "He split the sea, turned the cane into a running snake, cleaved the rocks so that springs gushed forth from them, took out his hand shinning white for the ".onlookers, and other signs the like of which the creature are unable to bring

The Imam confirmed his statement, saying: "You are right; they are proof of his Prophethood. He brought the like of which the creatures were unable to bring. Is it obligatory on you to believe him who claims Prophethood and performs something "?which all creatures are unable to perform

The Jew denied the Imam's statement, saying: "No, because there is none like Musa` , because of his position with his Lord and his nearness to Him. It is not incumbent on us to profess the Prophethood of him who claims it unless he brings us knowledge similar ".to that brought by Musa

The Imam disproved the Jew's statement, saying: "Then how come you admit the prophethood of the

other prophets who preceded Musa` who did not split the sea; nor did they cleave the stone so that twelve springs would gush forth from them; nor did they take their ".hands out shining white as Musa did; nor did they turn the rod into a snake running

The Jew replied: "I told you that if they performed signs as evidence for their Prophethood all other creation were unable to perform, if they brought something the like of which Musa had brought or they followed what Musa had brought, then it is ".incumbent on us to believe them

The Imam, peace be on him, disproved his argument, saying: "High Rabbi, what has prevented you from professing (the Prophethood of) 'Isa b. Maryam who brought the dead to life, healed the blind and the leprous, determined out of dust like the form of a "?bird, then he breathed into it and it became bird with Allah's permission

".The Jew dodged and said: "It is said that he did that, but we did not see it

The Imam answered him with a conclusive argument, saying: "Did you see the signs which Musa performed? Weren't Musa's trustworthy companions who gave an "?account of that

.Yes," came the answer"

The Imam forced him (to admit that) through a decisive argument, and then he said: "In this manner the successive accounts about what 'Isa` b. Maryam had done also "?`came to you. So why do you believe in Musa and do not believe in 'Isa

The High Rabbi kept silent, and feebleness

appeared on his face, for the Imam had closed before him all avenues of argument and established a decisive proof against him. The Imam, peace be on him, added: "Such is the matter of Muhammed, may Allah bless him and his family, what he brought, and every prophet whom Allah sent. Among his (Muhammed's) signs are: He was a poor orphan and wage shepherd. He did not learn (reading and writing); nor he studied under a teacher. Then he brought the Qur'an in which are the stories of the prophets, peace be on them, and their accounts letter for letter, and which reports about the bygone (communities) and those who will remain until the Day of Resurrection. Then it gives accounts of their secrets and what they did in their houses; therein are many verses (in this connection)."(١)

Some of them after the debate accepted Islam, for example al-Sabi'i.

Al-Sabi'i becomes Muslim

'Umran al-Sabi'i acknowledged the many scientific abilities of the Imam, peace be on him, such as his definitive answers to the most difficult philosophical questions, which none were able to answer except the divine successors of the prophets whom Allah endowed with knowledge and sound judgment. Accordingly, he embraced Islam and began saying: "I witness that Allah, the Most High, is as you have described, and witness that Muhammed, may Allah bless him and his family, is His Servant sent with guidance and the religion of the truth."

Then he prostrated himself in prayer before Allah and submitted to Him. The religious scholars and

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١- The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, pp. ٢٠٨-٢١٢.

the theologians admired the Imam's knowledge and talents, hence they told the people about his excellence and abundant knowledge. As for al-Ma'mun, he drowned (in pain, harboured malice against the Imam, envied him, and then left the session.(١

Some points to ponder about

?▯ Are any such debates found in the history of the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams

▯ The divinely appointed Imams had thorough knowledge of not only Quran but the other heavenly books too! Any such examples found among the Ismaili/Fatimid ?imams

▯ The divinely appointed Imams could speak all languages. Any such examples found ?among the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams

The divine Imams after Imam Ali al-Ridha (as) are as follows: Imam Mohammed Taqi (as), Imam Ali Naqi (as), Imam Hasan Al Askari (as) the ١٢th Imam Mohammed Al (Mahdi (atfs

A simple study of the lives, sayings, and the worship of all these Imams is available easily now on the internet and in books and can suffice to prove that these are the .divine leaders

Problems with Fiqh– Jurisprudence

point

Following the right chain is very important otherwise the followers of the wrong imam .are bound to go astray. It will have an effect on their deeds

The Ismailis, mostly Bohras follow the book of Da'aimul Islam written by Qadi al-Nu'man, and use it as their guide for jurisprudence. Qadi al- Nu'man served four of the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams and was in their service for ٥٠ years yet this book has no sayings of the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams. Why? The divine Imams are supposed to be full of knowledge and wisdom then how come Qadi al-Nu'man did

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The Life of Imam Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, pp. ۱۷۴-۱۷۵ -۱

not record any of the sayings of the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams in his famous book Da'aimul Islam? It took Qadi al Nu'man thirty years to complete this book yet in these thirty years he found nothing worth recording about the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams in this book? Moreover, the book has traditions of the Holy Prophet (sawa) and the Imams up to Imam al-Sadiq (as), but has no chain of narrators, and the chain of narrators is very important in determining if the tradition is authentic or not, especially when the .content of the tradition is unusual and does not match the norm

Like mentioned earlier, following the right chain is very important otherwise the followers of the wrong imam are going to perform the deeds that are not accurate and questionable. As an example, I'd like to examine the Bohra Calendar. The Bohras take pride that they follow a fixed calendar; therefore, they know the exact date when a new lunar month would start and when it finishes. On the other hand, the majority of the Muslim world relies on moonsighting to determine the start and end of a month. As per the Holy Qur'an and traditions of the Holy Prophet (sawa), Imam al-Baqir (as) and Imam al-Sadiq (as), the Muslims are instructed to sight the new moon .to determine the start and end of a month

I would like to shed some light on the Bohra calendar and prove that the Bohra .Calendar is not accurate

The Bohra Calendar Moon sighting

Quran tells us to follow the

lunar calendar; however, it does not specify the exact number of days in a given month. For instance, Quran does not tell the Muslims that Muharram is always going .to be ٣٠ days, nor does it say that the Holy Ramadhan is always going to be ٣٠ days

:The Holy Quran, Surah Baqarah verse ١٨٩ says

يَسْـــَٔـلُوْنَکَ عَنِ الْاَهِلَّةِ ۞ قُلْ هِیَ مَوَاقِيْتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ

They question you concerning the new moons. Say, "They are timekeeping signs for (the people and [for the sake of] hajj.(١)

اَيَّامًا مَّعْدُوْدٰتٍ

(Fasting) a certain number of days...(٢)

:And in Surah Baqarah verse ١٨٥

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِیْٓ اُنْزِلَ فِيْهِ الْقُرْاٰنُ هُدًی لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنٰتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدٰی وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۞ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۞ وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيْضًا اَوْ عَلٰی سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ اَيَّامٍ اُخَرَ ۞ يُرِيْدُ اللهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيْدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ ۞ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللهَ عَلٰی مَا هَدٰيكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ۞ ١٨٥

The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the distinction Therefore whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein And whoever is sick or upon a journey, then [he shall fast] a [like] number of other days Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire for you difficulty, and [He desires] that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the Greatness of Allah for His having guided you and that you (may give thanks.(٣

As per the ayahs above, we are supposed to follow the lunar calendar but nowhere does Quran

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Surah Baqarah (٢), Ayah ١٨٩; Translation of Sayyid Ali Quli Qarai -١

Surah Baqarah (٢), Ayah ١٨٤ -٢

٣- Surah Baqarah ١٨٥; Translation of M H Shakir

.specify fixed number of days for any months

The ahadith of the Ahlul Bayt (as) specifically tell us to start fasting when the moon of the Holy month of Ramadan is sighted and then stop fasting when the moon of Shawwal is sighted.

Here is a tradition of the Holy Prophet (sawa) that is in the famous book of Qadhi Numan that the Ismailis, especially the Bohras follow.

قَالَ: اِذَا رَاَيْتُمُ الْهِلَالَ اَوْ رَآهُ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ نَهَارًا فَلَا تُفْطِرُوْا حَتّٰى تَغْرُبَ الشَّمْسُ كَانَ ذٰلِكَ فِى اَوَّلِ النَّهَارِ اَوْ فِىْ آخِرِهٖ وَ قَالَ لَا تُفْطِرُوْا اِلَّا لِتَمَامِ ثَلَاثِيْنَ يَوْمًا مِنْ رُؤْيَهِ الْهِلَالِ اَوْ بِشَهَادَهِ شَاهِدَيْنِ اَنَّهُمَا رَاَيَاهُ

:The Holy Prophet (sawa) said

'When in the day time, you sight the crescent or two just ('Adil) persons sight it do not break your fast until the sun sets, this is whether (it is sighted) in the beginning of the day or the latter part of the day. And he (sawa) said: Do not stop fasting unless until all thirty days are complete starting with sighting of the crescent (for the beginning of Ramadhan) or with the witnessing of two witnesses who sighted it (crescent of Shawwal).' (1)

(Meaning: if the witnesses sighted the crescent of Shawwal earlier then you must stop fasting even if ٣٠ days are not complete).

This is what could be understood from this hadith of the Holy Prophet (sawa): Suppose it is the ٢٩th day of Ramadhan and two just ('Adil) people inform the one who is fasting that they saw the crescent

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1- Qadhi Numan (Numan ibn Muhammed), Da'aimul Islam ١st vol., p. ٢٨٠

in the daytime, then this person should not break the fast. Now suppose one fasts for ٣٠ days and still the moon was not sighted then he should not fast more than ٣٠ days. Suppose the moon was sighted on the ٢٩th day and the two just (‘Adil) people .reported it, then he should not fast the ٣٠th day

In other words, this hadith of the Holy Prophet (sawa) that is found in Da’aimul Islam, clearly says that the starting and the ending of the month should be based on sighting of the crescent. We also learn from this hadith that Ramadhan could be less than ٣٠ .days

:(The following are couple of ahadith of Imam al-Baqir (as) and Imam al-Sadiq (as

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ وَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ جَمِيعاً عَنِ ابْنِ أَبِي عُمَيْرٍ عَنْ حَمَّادِ بْنِ عُثْمَانَ عَنِ الْحَلَبِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع قَالَ إِنَّهُ سُئِلَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ فَقَالَ هِيَ أَهِلَّةُ الشُّهُورِ فَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الْهِلَالَ فَصُمْ وَ إِذَا رَأَيْتَهُ فَأَفْطِرْ

Imam al-Sadiq (as) (when) he was asked about the crescents, so he said: The crescents are for (distinguishing) the months, so when you sight the crescent, fast and (when you sight it (at the beginning of the next month) stop fasting.(١)

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْحَسَنِ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ مَهْزِيَارَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ أَبِي عُمَيْرٍ عَنْ أَيُّوبَ وَ حَمَّادٍ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مُسْلِمٍ عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ ع قَالَ إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الْهِلَالَ فَصُومُوا وَ إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُوهُ فَأَفْطِرُوا وَ لَيْسَ بِالرَّأْيِ وَ

Wasa’il ash-Shia, vol. ١٠, p. ٢٥٢ -١

لَا بِالتَّظَنِّی وَ لَکِنْ بِالرُّؤْیَهِ الْحَدِیثَ

Imam al-Baqir (as) said: fast when you sight the crescent and stop fasting when you see it and not with opinion nor with guessing but with actually seeing it happen.(1)

The Ismailis and the Ithna Asharis both believe in Imam al-Baqir and Imam al-Sadiq (as). These traditions are clearly saying that we should fast when we see the crescent and stop fasting when we see the crescent of the next month and guesstimating is not allowed. The crescent is visible after about seventeen hours(2) of conjunction (new born moon), so when the Holy Prophet (sawa) and the Imams (as) asked the Muslims to sight the crescent this means that moon will be about seventeen hours old.

We Muslims follow the Holy Quran and Quran does not give all the details, for example it tells us to pray but as for how to pray and how many units are in each prayer, we have to get these details from the Holy Prophet (sawa) and his Holy Progeny (as). Similarly, Quran tells us that the new moons are timekeeping signs for the people. The Holy Prophet (sawa) and the Imams (as) clarified how to determine when the month starts; that is by sighting the crescent.

It would be great to have an accurate calendar but unfortunately there is no such calendar. It is impossible to come up with an accurate universal calendar as the time when the moon can be sighted differs from region to region. Since the

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1- Wasa'il ash-Shia, vol. ۱۰, p. ۲۵۲

2- Moonsighting.com under 'FAQ's Youngest moon Sighting Criteria' Answer to Questions ۲.۱ ۱۰.۶

traditions we have from the Holy Prophet (sawa) and the Imams (as) tell us specifically to sight the crescent to determine the start of the month, we have no choice but to submit. So, on the Day of Judgment if we are asked then we can present this strong argument that we followed the rulings of the Holy Prophet (sawa).

The Bohras which is a sect of Ismailis have their own lunar calendar and all the Bohras around the world start and end the month on the same date, they do not consider the regional variations at all. If the Bohras would consider these regional variations they would see that it is impossible for the whole world to sight the crescent at the same time; this is due in part to the rising and setting of the moon in a perceived arc fashion much like the sun. In the same way that every point on the Earth does not see the sun in the same place at the same time to the extent that some areas are not able to see the sun at all for prolonged periods, different point on the Earth will not see the moon at the same place at the time. The clearest example of how a person's location affects what they can and can't see, astronomically speaking, is the fact that while it is winter in the northern hemisphere with very short days to the extent that in the arctic circle it can be night

for months on end while at that same time it is summer in the southern hemisphere so there would be long days to the extent in the Antarctic it is day for months on end. At that time, in the south you can clearly see the sun but in the north especially far north you will not see the sun at all. The same can be said for the moon that there are times when one area will clearly see the moon while another will be totally devoid of its presence. So, it is impossible to have one standard lunar calendar for the whole world. The Bohras neglect with respect to this fact seems to show that sighting of the moon for them is not a criteria when constructing their calendar clearly contradicting the tradition of the Holy Prophet (sawa). They do not pay heed to the tradition from the Holy Prophet (sawa) found in their books (that has been quoted above from their book Da'aimul Islam by Qadhi Numan) where the Holy Prophet (sawa) clearly specifies the significance of sighting the crescent. Now this heedlessness could be argued (all be it .wrongly) if their calendar was accurate but as we will see it is not accurate at all

Bohra Islamic Calendar

point

The Bohra/Ismaili calendar has fixed days for each month every year except for the month of Dhul-Hijjah which alternates between ۲۹ or ۳۰ days. Below is a four year .reading of a Bohra calendar

Hijri/۲۰۰۸ AD ۱۴۲۹

Muharram ۳۰ days, Safar ۲۹ days, Rabi ul-Awwal

days, Rabi uth- Thani ۲۹ days, Jamadi ul-Awwal ۳۰ days, Jamadi uth-Thani ۲۹ days, ۳۰ Rajab ۳۰ days, Shaban ۲۹ days, Ramadhan ۳۰ days, Shawwal ۲۹ days, Dhul-Qa'dah ۳۰ .days and Dhul-Hijjah ۳۰ days

Hijri/۲۰۰۹ AD ۱۴۳۰

Muharram ۳۰ days, Safar ۲۹ days, Rabi ul-Awwal ۳۰ days, Rabi uth- Thani ۲۹ days, Jamadi ul-Awwal ۳۰ days, Jamadi uth-Thani ۲۹ days, Rajab ۳۰ days, Shaban ۲۹ days, .Ramadhan ۳۰ days, Shawwal ۲۹ days, Dhul-Qa'dah ۳۰ days and Dhul-Hijjah ۲۹ days

Hijri/۲۰۱۰ AD ۱۴۳۱

Muharram ۳۰ days, Safar ۲۹ days, Rabi ul-Awwal ۳۰ days, Rabi uth- Thani ۲۹ days, Jamadi ul-Awwal ۳۰ days, Jamadi uth-Thani ۲۹ days, Rajab ۳۰ days, Shaban ۲۹ days, .Ramadhan ۳۰ days, Shawwal ۲۹ days, Dhul-Qa'dah ۳۰ days and Dhul-Hijjah ۳۰ days

Hijri/۲۰۱۱ AD ۱۴۳۲

Muharram ۳۰ days, Safar ۲۹ days, Rabi ul-Awwal ۳۰ days, Rabi uth- Thani ۲۹ days, Jamadi ul-Awwal ۳۰ days, Jamadi uth-Thani ۲۹ days, Rajab ۳۰ days, Shaban ۲۹ days, .Ramadhan ۳۰ days, Shawwal ۲۹ days, Dhul-Qa'dah ۳۰ days and Dhul-Hijjah ۲۹ days

As per the Bohra calendar, all the odd number months are ۳۰ days and all the even number months are ۲۹ days except the last month (Dhul-Hijjah) is ۲۹ or ۳۰ days. There can be no such pattern as far as phases of the moon go. If it would have been that simple the Holy Prophet (sawa) would have specified it, but he did not. Moreover, the .science today also says that there is no given pattern

Some questions regarding the number of days in a lunar month were posed to 'Moonsighting.com', which specializes in

:the moon sighting issue; one of their answers is listed below

Question: Is there a pattern of sequence of ۲۹ and ۳۰ days month? Some people say that after ۱۹ years moon phases repeat. Some others say that after ۳۰ years moon .cycle repeats

Answer: After careful scrutiny of long term calculations of moon cycles we found that, in fact, there is no pattern. We have checked ۴۰۰۰ years of calculations i.e. ۴۸۰۰۰ months and found no pattern. The ۱۹ year cycle of Gregorian year (equal to ۲۲۸ months in Gregorian Calendar), is a cycle after which the moon phases roughly repeat. Remember the word roughly, not exactly; and hence ۲۲۸ Gregorian months (or ۶۹۴۰ days) are approximately equal to ۲۳۵ lunar months (۱۹ years and ۷ month in Lunar Calendar). Similarly ۳۰ lunar years (۱۰۶۳۱ days) are approximately equal to ۲۹ years and ۱ month of solar calendar, but again this is also approximate. Long term calculations based on this rule sometimes gives results that are wrong by one day. Some others have pointed a cycle of ۲۱۰ lunar years, and it has the same flaw as ۳۰ year cycle. In (short, there is no pattern that can be quoted exactly repeating.(۱

?Where do the Bohras get this calendar from

The Tabular Islamic calendar (an example is the Fatimid or Misri calendar) is a rule-based variation of the Islamic calendar It has the same numbering of years and months, but the months are determined by arithmetic rules rather than by observation or astronomical calculations. It was developed by

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۱- Moonsighting.com

early Muslim astronomers of the second hijra century (the ۸th century of the Common Era) to provide a predictable time base for calculating the positions of the moon, sun, and planets. It is used by some Muslims in everyday life, particularly in the Bohra Ismaili community. It is their firm belief, that all Fatimid Imams and their Da'is(۱) have followed this tradition.

Each year has ۱۲ months. The odd numbered months have ۳۰ days and the even numbered months have ۲۹ days, except in a leap year when the ۱۲th and final month has ۳۰ days.

There are ۱۱ leap years in a ۳۰ year cycle. Noting that the average year has ۳۵۴ ۱۱/۳۰ days and a common year has ۳۵۴ days, at the end of the first year of the ۳۰-year cycle the remainder is ۱۱/۳۰ day. Whenever the remainder exceeds a half day (۱۵/۳۰ day), then a leap day is added to that year, reducing the remainder by one day. Thus at the end of the second year the remainder would be ۲۲/۳۰ day which is reduced to −۸/۳۰ day by a leap day.

Using this rule the leap years are ۲, ۵, ۷, ۱۰, ۱۳, ۱۶, ۱۸, ۲۱, ۲۴, ۲۶ and ۲۹ of the ۳۰-year cycle. If leap days are added whenever the remainder equals or exceeds a half day, then all leap years are the same except ۱۵ replaces ۱۶.

The Ismaili Tayyebi (Bohra) community uses the following order of leap years in their ۳۰-year cycle:

۲, ۵, ۸, ۱۰,

۱- Representatives of the Imam

and ۲۹ ۲۷ ,۲۴ ,۲۱ ,۱۹ ,۱۶ ,۱۳

:Apart from these, there are two more orders for the leap years which are as follows

and ۲۹ ۲۶ ,۲۴ ,۲۱ ,۱۸ ,۱۵ ,۱۳ ,۱۰ ,۷ ,۵ ,۲

and ۳۰ ۲۷ ,۲۴ ,۲۱ ,۱۹ ,۱۶ ,۱۳ ,۱۱ ,۸ ,۵ ,۲

The mean month is ۲۹ ۱۹۱/۳۶۰ days = ۲۹.۵۳۰۵۵۵۵... days. This is slightly too short and so will be a day out in about ۲۵۰۰ years.(۱) The Tabular Islamic calendar also deviates (from the observation based calendar in the short term for various reasons.(۲

The Bohra calendar has an average month of ۲۹.۵۳۰۵۵۵(۳) and the long-term average duration of the lunar month is ۲۹.۵۳۰۵۸۹ as we can see the average month in the Bohra calendar is slightly shorter than the actual average meaning that in around ۲۵۰۰ years(۴) the Bohra calendar will be a whole day further behind(۵) the scientifically calculated birth of the moon couple this with the current differences and we can conclude in around ۱۰۰۰ years (as currently we are in ۱۴۳۲) the Bohra calendar will .have little to do with the lunar phases or lunar calendar

Another important reason why the Bohra calendar is inaccurate is when I looked into the moon sighting reports for couple of months (Holy Ramadhan and Shawwal) and compared it with the Bohra Calendar, I found that the Bohras calendar is definitely off and in one of the years (۱۴۳۱ AH) the Bohras started fasting when the moon was barely born! Actually, the Bohras in India started Ramadhan fast

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۱- Detailed explanation to follow

۲- ۹] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabular_Islamic_calendar]

۳- We obtain this by taking the common Bohra calendar year, ۶ months ۲۹ day and ۶ months ۳۰ day, then multiplying that by ۳۰ years (as that is the cycle) and adding on the ۱۱ leap days. Finally we divide that by ۳۰ to get the average year and by ۱۲ to get .the average month

۴- We obtain this value by subtracting the Bohra calendar average month from the lunar calendar average month, then we divide ۱ by this number (as we are trying to see when the calendars will differ by a day) and finally divide the obtained number by ۱۲ to get the value in years and we get the value ۲۴۹۱.۶۵ years (approximately ۲۵۰۰ years)

۵- What this means is that the Bohras after about ۱۰۰۰ years will be starting the month about a day or day and a half before the new moon is born!!! As it is they are sometimes starting the month even before the moon is born. Please see below where Ramadhan of ۱۴۳۱ Hijri (۲۰۱۰) is discussed.

.before the moon was born in ۱۴۳۱ AH

Following is a four year study based upon the data found in moonsighting.com and :crescentmoonwatch.org

(Moon sighting for Ramadan ۱۴۲۹ Hijri (۲۰۰۸

The astronomical New moon is on Saturday, August ۳۰th, ۲۰۰۸ at ۱۹:۵۷ UT: No sighting reports are expected on August ۳۰. However, Nigeria has claimed to see the moon on (Saturday.(۱

This means that the moon was barely born on August ۳۰th. It was seen on probably on ۳۱st of August or ۱st of September. Then the first of the Holy month of Ramadhan should have been the ۱st of Sept or max ۲nd of September, but as per the Bohra/Ismaili calendar the ۱st of Ramadan was August ۳۱st, ۲۰۰۸. It was impossible to see the crescent on August ۳۰th, then how come the Bohras started fasting on the ۳۱st ?of August

India is ۵ ½ hours ahead of Universal Time (UT or GMT), so the moon was born at ۱:۲۷ AM on Aug ۳۱st (Indian Standard Time) and the Bohras started fasting the same day in !!!India

(Moon sighting report for Shawwal ۱۴۲۹ Hijri (۲۰۰۸

The Astronomical New Moon is on Monday, September ۲۹, ۲۰۰۸ at ۸:۱۲ GMT, ۴:۱۲ am EDT, ۱:۱۲ am PDT). It will not be visible(۲) on September ۲۹ except small possibility in Polynesian Islands. On Tuesday, September ۳۰, it will be visible in New Zealand Australia, Indonesia, South Asia, Africa and Americas. In North America on September (۳۰, it can be seen in Southern belt states.(۳

This means that the moon of Shawwal could be sighted only on the ۳۰th of September or

۱- Moonsighting.com. Note as per Crescentmoonwatch.org the new moon was born at ۱۹:۵۸UT and it was not visible at all on Aug ۳۰th, ۲۰۰۸. In order to access the data on crescentmoonwatch.org go on the site and click on 'next new moon' and scroll down and until you see the 'Global Visibility Maps for previous months'. Also note that crescentmoonwatch.org is a non-Muslim site. The site address is [http://www.crescentmoonwatch.org/] ۱۰

۲- Note: When they say not visible, they mean the crescent will not be visible even in the best weather conditions.

۳- Moonsighting.com; and as per Crescentmoonwatch.org the crescent was not visible on the ۲۹th except probably with optical aid in South Africa.

۱st of Oct ۲۰۰۸, so Eid ul Fitr should have been on ۱st or ۲nd of October ۲۰۰۸, but as per the Bohra/Ismailis calendar Eid ul Fitr was on Sept ۳۰th, ۲۰۰۸. It was impossible to see the crescent on the ۲۹th of September, then how come they celebrated the Eid on the ۳۰th? If one does not fast intentionally on a day that fasting is wajib then as per Shariah he should makeup that fast and give kaffarah (Penalty). The Bohras need to be careful and look into this matter seriously.

Moonsighting for Ramadan ۱۴۳۰ Hijri (۲۰۰۹)

The Astronomical New Moon is on August ۲۰, ۲۰۰۹ (Thursday) at ۱۰:۰۱ UT. This moon cannot be seen in any continent. There is a small chance to see only in Polynesian Islands on August ۲۰. On August ۲۱, it is very difficult to see in Europe and Canada. It can be seen with difficulty in India, Pakistan, Middle East, and Northern Africa. On August ۲۱, it can be easily seen in New Zealand, Australia, most of Africa, and Americas.(۱)

This means that the crescent of the Holy month of Ramadhan could be sighted only on the ۲۱st or ۲۲nd of August depending on the horizon, so the ۱st of Ramadan should have been ۲۲nd or ۲۳rd of August, ۲۰۰۹, but as per the Bohra/Ismaili calendar the ۱st of Ramadan was on ۲۱st of August. It was impossible to sight the crescent on August ۲۰th but still Bohras went ahead and started fasting on ۲۱st of August?

Moon sighting for Shawwal ۱۴۳۰ Hijri (۲۰۰۹)

The Astronomical New Moon is

۱- Moonsighting.com; Note as per crescentmoonwatch.org the new moon was born at ۱۰:۰۲ UT and it was not visible at all on August ۲۰th.

on September ١٨, ٢٠٠٩ (Friday) at ١٨:۴۴ UT. This moon is not visible anywhere on September ١٨. On September ١٩, it will still not be visible in Asia, Europe and Canada. It can easily be seen in South Africa and South America on Sep ١٩. On the same day, with difficulty, it is possible to be seen in Western Australia, Central Africa, Caribbean Islands, Central America and very Southern areas of USA. In USA, on Sep. ١٩, the moon is going to be very low on the horizon at sunset, so try to see before Maghrib. (Binocluars will help.(١)

This means that the moon for Shawwal could be sighted on September ٢٠th or ٢١st depending on the zone, so Eid ul fitr should have been on ٢١st or ٢٢nd of September, ٢٠٠٩, but as per the Bohra/Ismaili calendar Eid ul Fitr was on ٢٠th of September, ٢٠٠٩. The crescent was not at all visible on the ١٨th and on the ١٩th it was not at all visible in Asia, Europe and Canada but the Bohras in Asia, Europe and Canada celebrated their ?Eid on September ٢٠th

(Moon sighting for Ramadan ۱۴۳۱ Hijri (۲۰۱۰

The Astronomical New Moon is on August ١٠, ٢٠١٠ (Tuesday) at ٣:٠٨ UT. On this day, this moon may not be seen in any continent. With difficulty it may be visible in South America. Only in Polynesian Islands on August ١٠, it will be easily visible. On August ١١, it will be easy to see in New Zealand, Australia, South-East Asia, Africa and Americas, while it

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١- Moonsighting.com; and as per crescentmoonwatch.org the moon was not visible at all on September ١٨th at all.

(will be difficult to see in Northern Asia, Europe, and Canada.(١)

According to the data above the moon for the Holy month of Ramadhan was barely born on August ١٠th, ٢٠١٠ and it was not visible at all on the ١٠th of August. Hence it could have been sighted on ١١th of August or ١٢th of August; this means the ١st of Holy Ramadhan should have been ١٢th of August or ١٣th of August. As per the Bohra/Ismaili calendar the first of Ramadhan was on the ١٠th of August, which means they fasted .on the day that moon was barely born

As a matter of fact India is ۵ ½ hours ahead of Universal Time (UT or GMT), the new moon was born at ٣:٠٨ UT on the ١٠th of August which is equivalent to ٨:٣٨ AM Indian Standard Time, this means that Bohras who started fasting in India on the ١٠th would have started fasting before the new moon was actually born!!! This is an obvious .error

(Moon sighting for Shawwal ١۴٣١ (٢٠١٠

The Astronomical New Moon is on September ٨, ٢٠١٠ (Wednesday) at ١٠:٣٠ UT. This moon may not be visible anywhere on September ٨ except some Polynesian Islands. On September ٩, it will still not be visible in Northern Asia, Europe and Canada. It can easily be seen in New Zealand, Australia, South-East Asia, Africa and Americas on Sep (٩th.(٢

The data above shows that the moon for Shawwal was born on ٨th of September, ٢٠١٠ ,and hence it was probably visible on September ٩th

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١- Moonsighting.com; and as per crescentmoonwatch.org the crescent will be easily .visible only in a very small part of South Africa and nowhere else on August ١٠th

٢- Moonsighting.com; and as per crescentmoonwatch.org the crescent was not visible .at all except with the aid of optical aid in South Africa only on September ٨th

Hence, Eid ul Fitr should have been on ۱۰th of September, but as per the . ۲۰۱۰ Bohra/Ismail calendar Eid ul Fitr was on ۹th of September. The scientific data clearly says that crescent will not be visible at all except in Polynesian islands and as per crescentmoonwatch.org, with the help of optical aid in South Africa and nowhere else ?but the Bohras celebrated Eid on ۹th of September

(Moonsighting for Ramadan ۱۴۳۲ (۲۰۱۱

The Astronomical New Moon is on July ۳۰, ۲۰۱۱ (Saturday) at ۱۸:۴۰ UT. On July ۳۰, it cannot be seen anywhere in the world. On Sunday, July ۳۱, ۲۰۱۱, it can be easily seen in Southern Africa and South America, but with difficulty in Central Africa. On August ۱, it (can be easily seen everywhere except Northern Europe.(۱

As per the information above, the moon was born on July ۳۰th, ۲۰۱۱ and it cannot be seen anywhere. Hence it was probably visible on July ۳۱st or August ۱st, ۲۰۱۱, which means that the Holy Ramadhan should have started on ۱st of August or ۲nd of August, ۲۰۱۱. As per the Bohra/Ismaili calendar the ۱st of Holy Ramadhan was on ۳۱st July, .۲۰۱۱

(Moon sighting report for Shawwal ۱۴۳۲ (۲۰۱۱

The Astronomical New Moon is on August ۲۹, ۲۰۱۱ (Monday) at ۳:۰۴ UT. On August ۲۹, by naked eye it can be seen in Southern part of South America and Polynesian Islands. With binoculars it may be seen in Cape Town South Africa, Northern part of South America, and in Hawaii. On Tuesday, August ۳۰, ۲۰۱۱, it can be easily seen everywhere except

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Moonsighting.com; and as per crescentmoonwatch.org the crescent was not visible -۱ at all on July ۳۰th

(Northern Asia and Northern Europe.(١

As per the data above the moon for Shawwal was born on ٢٩th of August, ٢٠١١ and it was probably visible on August ٢٩th, ٢٠١١ in very few places like Southern part of South America and Polynesian Islands, but it was definitely not visible in India, UK, North America etc. It was easily visible everywhere on August ٣٠th. Hence Eid ul Fitr should have been on ٣١st of August, but as per the Bohra/Ismail calendar Eid ul Fitr was on ٣٠th of August, ٢٠١١ and all the Bohras throughout the world celebrated Eid on ٣٠th of .August

As per the data presented above, it is clear that the Bohra calendar is not accurate at all. The data above shows that most of the time the Bohras started the month before the crescent was visible and sometimes even before the crescent was born(٢) in their region, which is against the rulings of Islam. The Bohra Calendar does sound very good as the dates are fixed, but it is not accurate and it is against the rulings of Islam. It is interesting that Bohras follow the book Da'aimul Islam and there is a tradition of the Holy Prophet (sawa) regarding sighting the crescent, but the Bohras insist on following a calendar. It seems that this calendar was made by the Fatimid for the sake of convenience only. Like I said earlier, that it would be great to have an accurate .calendar, but unfortunately the Bohra Calendar is not accurate

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١ - Moonsighting.com; and as per crescentmoonwatch.org the crescent was only .visible in South Africa on the ٢٩th of August

٢- .In Ramadhan ١٤٣١ H (٢٠١٠), we discussed above

Some frequently asked questions about moonsighting

Following are some very frequently asked questions that were posed to :Moonsighting.com

?Question: What is the process one must use to correctly sight the moon

Answer of Moonsighting.com: Go after about ۱۵ minutes after sunset. Look in the direction of the setting sun, just above it, also look to the right or left of it up to ۳۰° in either direction of the setting sun. Keep looking until the time of moonset that you can obtain from local newspapers. Binocular helps. Have one or more persons with you, if possible. If you do this for a few months, you will know yourself about improving your procedure. What evening you should go to look, can be found from my web site, or if you know when the moon was sighted in your area for the previous month, then .count ۲۹ days from it

?Question: If the moon is big, does it mean it is a second day moon

Answer of Moonsighting.com: As most of us know, the moon goes through several phases. The months of the Islamic Calendar are based on sighting of the new moon every month. In Astronomy, a new moon means "when the moon of the previous month disappears (i.e. the moon goes from a slightly visible crescent to a completely black sphere that is impossible to be seen)." Remember, new moon is dark and invisible. About ۱۷-۲۳ hours after the new moon, a thin crescent becomes visible on earth; this is visible new moon. As we were taught

by Allah (Qur'an ۲:۱۸۹) and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), it is the sighting of this crescent that marks the start of a new month. Therefore, even though a moon may be born on one day, it may not been seen until the next day. Furthermore, if a new moon is born less than ۱۵ hours before sunset on day ۱; it will not been seen until sunset of day ۲; and when it is finally seen it is ۱۵+۲۴=۳۹ hours old and will look very thick. This does NOT mean that this is a second day moon. A first day crescent-moon can be very thin in some locations and it can also be thick in other locations because of time difference. As Muslims, we should always remember that our first priority is to follow the teachings of our beloved Prophet (peace be upon him) who told us to start the month when we see the crescent, not when the moon is "born." If we do that, Insha-Allah we will start the month at the "right" time (the time that Allah intends for the month to start for a specific location).

For more questions regarding moonsighting, please visit their website.

Conclusive Points

In the discussion so far a few examples and some extracts from the lives of the Ismaili Imams and some of the Ithna Ashari Imams were discussed. When we look at the history of Ismaili Imams, it is apparent that they were not divinely appointed. They sinned

and oppressed, like in the case of al-Hakim. How can we follow someone who sins? The Fatimid/Ismaili Imams had no traits in their lifestyles to show that they were spiritual Imams. They have no noble sayings and their life history has nothing in it that one can say, by looking and following their lifestyle, one could get closer to Allah (swt). The goal of the Prophets and the Imams was to lead mankind closer to Allah (swt), but the Fatimid/Ismaili Imams had no traits that would lead someone closer to the .Almighty

On the other hand, the Imams of the Ithna Ashari Shias were full of knowledge, had impeccable characters, their sayings, their lifestyles and supplications, all lead .(towards seeking closeness to Allah (swt

Yes, the Fatimid period was a golden period. Egypt was flourishing; nice mosques and university like al-Azhar were built, I agree that this was a great achievement but this does not mean that the Fatimid were the rightful Imams. Right now, when we go to Saudi Arabia, the Masjid ul-Nabi and the Masjid ul-Haraam are very nicely built. The Saudi's are working very actively in propagating their opinion of Islam. This does not mean that they are on the right path. Let us go a step further, right now the western countries are flourishing and they have very good universities, and they are highly .developed nations but this does not mean that they are on the right path

Bohras are very organized, so this is one

of the arguments that Ismaili Bohras give to prove the authenticity of their beliefs. Being organized does not mean that they are on the right path! There are other religions that prevail in the Gujarat region of India and those people are very organized too; does it mean that they are on the right path? Even the Aga Khani Khojas are very organized; does it mean that they are on the right path? Moreover, if the Bohras are on the right path then how come we do not see people accepting their religion? How come the Bohras do not propagate their religion? Dai is supposed to ?invite people towards the religion, is he doing his job

When the youth question the Bohra Mullas about the inconsistencies, they are told to follow just like their fathers. There are ayahs in the Quran that condemn following the religion of your forefathers blindly, for example; "When they are told 'Follow what Allah has sent down,' they say, 'We will rather follow what we have found our fathers following,' "what even if their fathers neither applied reason nor were guided?!" (١) This Ayah tells us not to follow blindly what our fathers and forefathers followed. Also .tells us, that our fathers and forefathers could have been following the wrong path

I was told, 'What is the big deal, if one follows ١٢ Imams or ٢١ Imams?' They further added by saying 'we follow Imamate too, like we are supposed to. So, what is the big

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Surah Baqarah (٢), Ayah ١٧٠ -١

deal?' Well, it is a big deal. Allah (swt) orders us to follow His Prophet (sawa) and the ones vested with authority. If we follow the ones not vested with authority by Allah (swt), then we will go astray. For example: I buy very sophisticated equipment. It comes with an instruction booklet that asks me to call an authorized agent for a demonstration. If I just follow the instruction booklet and not call the authorized agent, then I am not following the instructions of the manufacturer. The manufacturer knows its product and knows that just following the instruction booklet is not enough. Along with the instruction booklet, an authorized agent is necessary. Mind you, it must be an authorized agent, not any leader. In the same way, Allah (swt) knows us. Along with the book, He sent the Messenger (sawa) and the Imams (as). We must follow them all. We must follow the ones He gave the authority to.

It is very important to follow the chain. Yes! It is a big deal. Please take this issue very seriously and do some research. This world as we know is temporary. We are being tested. The real life is the hereafter. I know that work keeps us busy. We need to have a balance. We need to take out time for Allah (swt). We need to seek closeness to Allah (swt). In order to seek closeness to Him, we need to believe in all the Messengers and follow our Prophet (sawa)

and all the Imams (as). As we know, Risalat[١] and Imamat are both important, .because they both are part of the principles of religion

As per our belief, on the Day of Judgment, we will be called with our Imams; if in this world, we believed in the rightful Imams, the ones that the Holy Prophet (sawa) declared by the order of Allah, then we shall be called with them. Otherwise, God forbid, if we had followed the wrong imams, then we will be in their group. So we .definitely do need to do some serious research and use our intellect and decide

We should research without any bias and we should be careful when we encounter the truth because people react to the truth in different ways. Some know the truth, but due to social pressures, they do not accept the truth. To them, society is more important than the word of the Almighty. They think that they will live in this world .forever and look at the worldly things and cling to the earth

Some say these things do not matter as long as we pray and fast and go to Hajj etc. This is a wrong belief! I repeat that Satan worshipped Allah (swt) like no one else. The only wrong thing he did was to disobey one command of Allah (swt), when he refused to do Sajda[٢] to Adam (as). Satan refused to obey only one command of Allah (swt), and all the years of his worship were

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Prophethood -١

Prostrate -٢

nullified and he was thrown out of the kingdom of mercy. Allah (swt) wants us to worship Him the way he wants to be worshipped. We should really ponder on this. The problem with us, Muslims, is that we pick and choose. The things that are easy to do or are socially acceptable, or are profitable, we accept them; the ones that we do not want to do for some reason, we reject or justify. The problem with us Muslims is that .we do not submit to His laws

Some say that it does not matter what we believe as long as we do righteous deeds. If one does righteous deeds without belief, is that sufficient? What are the righteous ?deeds

In the Holy Quran, whenever we see the mention of righteous deeds, it is .accompanied by belief in almost all the ayahs

:For example in Suratul Bayyinat verse ٧

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ ۝٧

(Those who have faith and do righteous deeds, - they are the best of creatures.(١)

:Another example, Suratul Baqarah verse ٨٢

وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ۝٨٢

And those who have faith and do righteous deeds, they shall be the inhabitants of (paradise; they shall remain in it (forever).(٢)

And there are many other places where faith and righteous deeds come together. .Bottom line: righteous deeds are almost always with faith (Imaan) in Quran

If one does righteous deeds only, without having faith (Imaan), then it is not enough; these deeds which are apparently

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Suratul Bayyinat (٩٨), Ayah ٧ -١

.good deeds will not help this person in the hereafter

:The Holy Quran, Surah Nur verse ۳۹, says

وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍۢ بِقِيْعَةٍ يَّحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْاٰنُ مَاۗءً ۰ۭ حَتّٰٓي اِذَا جَاۗءَهٗ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَـيْـــــــًٔا وَّوَجَدَ اللہَ عِنْدَہٗ فَوَفّٰىہُ حِسَابَہٗ ۰ۭ وَاللہُ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ۳۹ۙ

As for the faithless, their works are like a mirage in a plain, which the thirsty man supposes to be water. When he comes to it, he finds it to be nothing; but there he finds Allah, who will pay him his full account, and Allah is swift at reckoning.(۱)

What is imaan? If one says the Shahadatain (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah), is that enough? ?Does it mean that this person has faith

:The answer is no! As per Quran Suratul Hujurat verse ۱۴

قَالَتِ الْاَعْرَابُ اٰمَنَّا ۰ۭ قُلْ لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوْا وَلٰكِنْ قُوْلُوْٓا اَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْاِيْمَانُ فِيْ قُلُوْبِكُمْ ۰ۭ وَاِنْ تُطِيْعُوا اللہَ وَرَسُوْلَہٗ لَا يَـلِتْكُمْ مِّنْ اَعْمَالِكُمْ شَـيْـــــًٔا ۰ۭ اِنَّ اللہَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۱۴

The Bedouins say, "We have faith." Say, "You do not have faith yet; rather say, "We have embraced Islam," for faith has not yet entered into your hearts. Yet if you obey Allah and His Apostle, He will not stint anything of (the reward of) your works. Indeed Allah is all-forgiving, all-merciful."(۲)

This ayah is clearly saying that if one embraces Islam, it does not mean that this person has faith. This tells us that more is needed to say that we have faith! One cannot just

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۱- Suratul Nur (۲۴), Ayah ۳۹

۲- Suratul Hujurat (۴۹), Ayah ۱۴

.say that he has faith when he embraces Islam

Then, what is faith? When can one say that he has faith? Imam Ali (as) in Nahjul :Balagha says

وَ قَالَ وَ [قَدْ] سُئِلَ عَنِ الْإِيْمَانِ فَقَالَ الْإِيْمَانُ مَعْرِفَةٌ بِالْقَلْبِ وَ اِقْرَارٌ بِاللِّسَانِ وَ عَمَلٌ بِالْاَرْكَانِ

He was asked about faith so he said; faith is to know with one's heart and affirm with (one's tongue and to act with one's limbs.(۱

He (as) is saying that: Imaan is made up of three elements (Rukn), Tongue (Say), .(Heart (Belief) and Amal (Practice

Let us ponder on this hadith: If one says the Shahadatain using his tongue but does not believe in it and nor practices it, then what good is it? If one says it and believes in it but does not practice, then what good is it? If one says it, practices it and does not believe in it, he is a hypocrite. Therefore, what Imam Ali (as) had rightly said in order for one to have Imaan, he should say it and believe in it from the bottom of his heart .and practice

What are the righteous deeds? The righteous deeds are those that are required by the divine law. Once a person has Imaan in the true sense (say it, believe in it and .practice it), then he will do righteous deeds

In order to practice and do righteous deeds, then it is important to follow the rightful divine leaders. Otherwise, if we follow the ones who are not divine then we

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Nahjul Balagha, Saying ۲۲۷ -۱

will end up doing deeds that we are assuming are righteous but are like mirages, just .like what the ayah of Surah Nur that I quoted above, says

Following the ones who are not divinely appointed will end up in deeds that are null and void.(١) Some people say that intention counts, if the intention is good then that is all that matters. A good deed, in order to be accepted, must be done right. Otherwise, it will not be accepted, whether the intention was pure or not. I will give a worldly example: Let us take computers for instance; when we are supposed to hit 'enter' and we hit 'back space' instead, the computer will not accept the command. We will go no place, no matter how good our intention is. From this worldly example, we see the results of worldly things right in this world. But we believe in Allah (swt), who is Unseen. We believe in the heaven and hell, which are unseen. We believe in the hereafter, which is unseen, and the rewards or punishment that we accumulate for the deeds we do for the hereafter are unseen. So we do need to be careful and perform the deeds as per the requirement of our Lord the Almighty. We can do that only when we follow the rightful divine representatives sent or appointed by Allah .(swt). If we follow any Tom Dick and Harry, we will err

Enough information was provided in this little booklet for one

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١- The Bohra calendar discussed earlier proves this point inshaAllah

to seriously ponder about and use the intellect and scrutinize without any bias, in .(order to seek closeness to the Almighty Allah (swt

I myself was a Bohra once, I had many questions and after I got my answers I converted to Ithna Ashari Shia sect, and I wanted to share my findings with others. If anyone has any arguments against what I wrote or my beliefs, I am willing to listen. I believe that we should never be biased and we should always leave the lid of our .heart open, so that the guidance could seep in

I would like to conclude with the saying of Nabi Shoayb (as) to his people which is in :Qur'an In Suratul Hud verse ۸۸

He said, "O my people! Have you considered, should I stand on a manifest proof from my Lord, who has provided me a good provision from Himself? I do not wish to oppose you by what I forbid you. I only desire to put things in order, as far as I can, and my success lies only with Allah: in Him I have put my trust, and to Him I turn (penitently."(۱

Final Points To Ponder About

 The Bohras and the Ithna Ashari Shias are common in their belief up until Imam al-Sadiq (as), then how come the Bohras do not consider the sayings of the Holy Prophet (sawa) where he talked about having twelve successors and also the traditions of the Holy Prophet (sawa) regarding jurisprudence, for example the tradition on moonsighting that

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Suratul Hud (۱۱), Ayah ۸۸ -۱

?is found in their own book, 'Da'aimul Islam' that was quoted earlier

 If the Bohras believe in Imam al-Baqir (as) and Imam al-Sadiq (as), then why do they not follow the authentic traditions of Imam al-Baqir (as) and Imam al-Sadiq (as) found in the authentic books of Ithna Ashari Shias? Why do the Bohras insist on following just one book 'Da'aimul Islam' for deriving their rulings, knowing that Da'aimul Islam does not have the chain of narrators, so there is no way of knowing if ?the tradition being quoted is authentic or not

 One must believe in the principles of religion (Divine Unity, Divine Justice, Prophethood, Imamate and The Day of Judgment) in order to be a believer; one cannot believe in four out of five tenets and still consider himself a believer. Among the five tenets is Prophethood, one must believe in all ۱۲۴,۰۰۰ Prophets in order to be a believer, and similarly, the Imamate; one must believe in all the divinely appointed Imams in order to be a believer. We proved earlier that the Fatimid/Ismaili Imams .could not have been divinely appointed

 There are traditions of the Holy Prophet (sawa) regarding twelve successors found in the books of Shias as well as Ahle Sunna. However not a single tradition regarding ?۲۱ successors is found in any books. Why

 There are traditions of the Holy Prophet (sawa) regarding twelve successors found in the books of Shias as well as the books of Ahle Sunna. However not a single tradition regarding ۲۱

?successors or ۴۹ successors is found in any books. Why

 I challenge if one can find one authentic hadith of the Holy Prophet (sawa) regarding .(۲۱ Imams (Bohra belief) or ۴۹ Imams (Agha Khani belief

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The Reader is invited to study Islam as taught by the Holy Prophet (sawa) and his (Ahlulbayt (as

www.al-islam.org [۱۱] has resources to facilitate this study

Questions suggestions for improvement of the book may also be sent to the following :address

[oneayahaweek@gmail.com [۱۲

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

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replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

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.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

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:Appreciation

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